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Behind the myths of Charlie Parker

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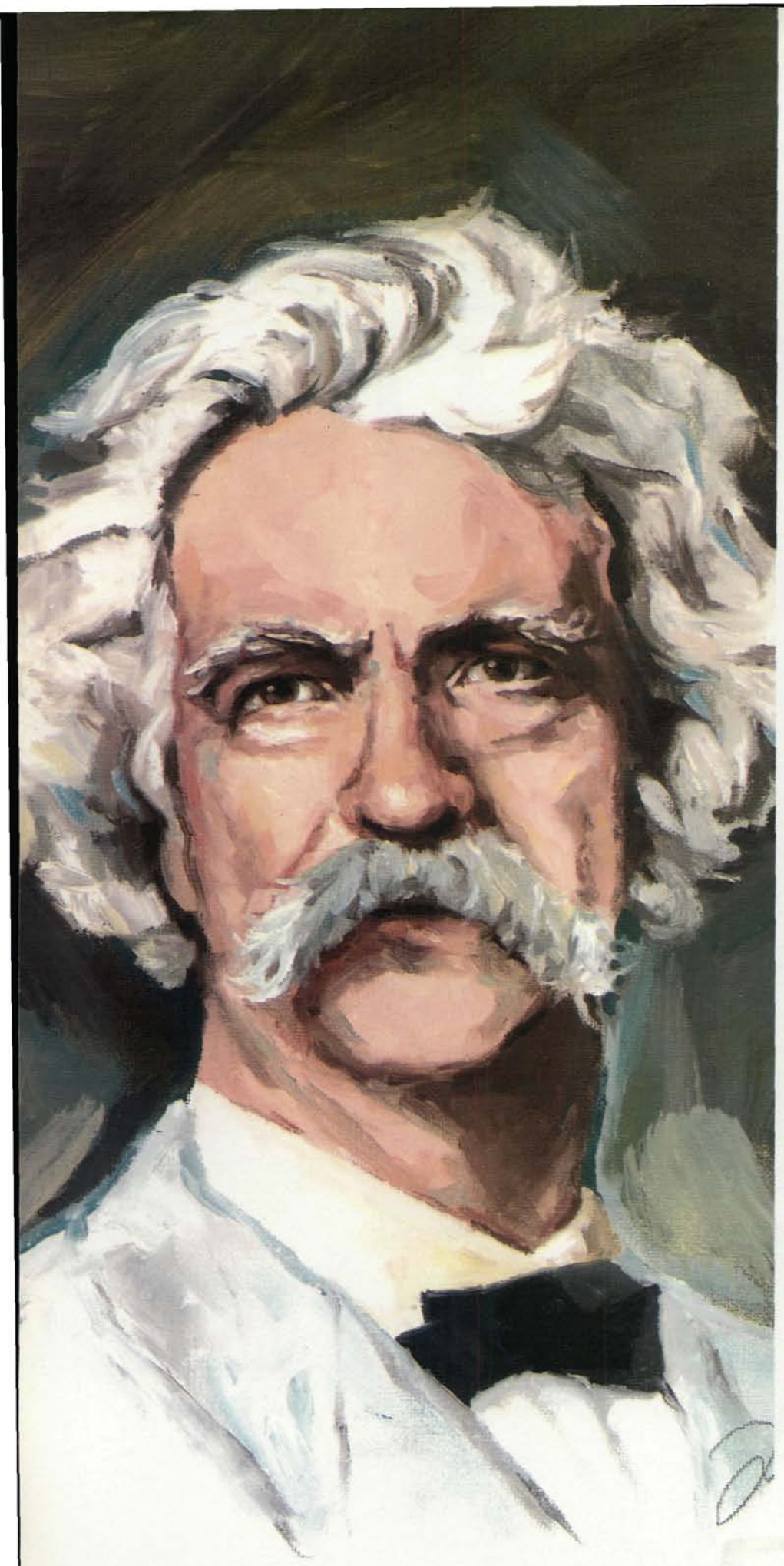

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Mark Twain
American Writer
1835-1910

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CORRESPONDENCE

TROPICAL TRUTHS

To the editors:

I take strong exception to the assertion of Peter P. Swire that "backers of the forest movement are mostly in the United States or other modern industrialized countries" ("Tropical Chic," January 30). In working to reform American laws concerning environmental protection safeguards in international development aid, I've discovered that the strongest supporters of rainforest protection are natives directly affected by the devastation of the forests.

It's the natives who stand to lose the most if we permit the deforestation to continue on such a massive scale. When your whole village has been displaced by deforestation, or your soil has been destroyed and your crops wiped out by the loss of forest cover—that's real suffering.

In light of this fact, I think it extremely callous for anyone to dismiss the rainforest preservation movement as a concern primarily of First World dilettantes.

ROBERT W. KASTEN, JR.
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

I was amazed to read that Roger Hornsby sang at a recent "Save the Rainforests" benefit ("Tropical Chic," January 30). How about Honus Wagner? Ty Cobb? Did Shoeless Joe Jackson put in an appearance? I hear Wee Willie Keeler did a song with that young buck, Vinegar Bend Mizell.

Anyway, it was Rogers, not Roger. But Bruce doesn't mind.

COL. BLACKWOOD P. REGAN
U.S. Army
Grafton, Massachusetts

POTSHOTS, CONT'D.

To the editors:

Well, there you go again. Two months after the general election, and you are still taking potshots at Michael Dukakis. (Notebook, January 23). This time you deride him for his state's budget deficit and ridicule his decision not to go for a fourth term as governor.

Come on folks, give it a rest. Governor Dukakis is an extraordinarily bright and dedicated public servant who made some mistakes and lost a bid for the presidency. Why can't you just leave it at that and give the man some respect?

KENT ALEXANDER
Atlanta, Georgia

INCONTINENTAL SERVICE

To the editors:

"Waiting for Nodough" (January 2) apparently was written by one who has never dined on the Continent nor said "Hello, my name is Zachary and I'll be your waiter this evening."

On the Continent, where the modern industrialized system of service charges rules, service in restaurants is uniformly inhospitable. Waitpersons care little, if at all, for their customers' needs, appetites or pleasures. From Russia to Italy and England to France, I found precious few waitpersons whose service justified any sort of charge. If Continental service standards were wrought on U.S. diners, the restaurant industry would be crucified at the hands of Mrs. Paul.

As a veteran waiter, I feel Mr. Citron's characterization of waitpersons as an oppressed class unable to climb upward thanks to the tip system is inaccurate. Waitpersons can own land, audition for plays and, if they get their break, appear on Johnny Carson.

PAUL GILLESPIE
Somerville, Massachusetts

PARITY POOPER

To the editors:

You contend ("Gorba Claus," January 2) that we must resist Gorbachev's blandishments and aim for parity of conventional forces in Europe if we aspire to achieving real security. There are three reasons why absolute parity is unnecessary: (a) classical military doctrine tells us that defensive forces enjoy an advantage over offensive ones so that the aggressor must possess about a 2-to-1 initial advantage; (b) NATO forces are superior in terms of both technology and training; and (c) the Warsaw Pact forces include large non-Soviet elements that are unlikely to contribute enthusiastic warriors to any Russian-initiated assault.

HAROLD R. HOGSTROM
Holland, Pennsylvania
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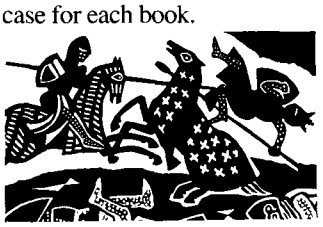

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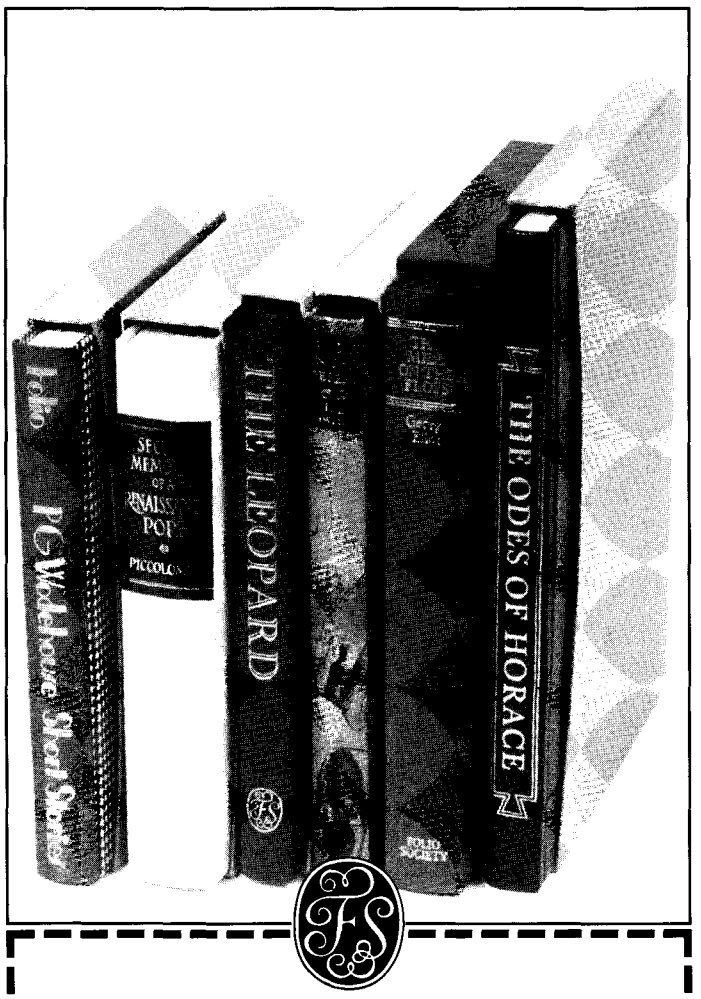

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FROM WASHINGTON

He's Back (Part 723)

George Bush is perfectly all right in his way, I suppose, and so is Jim Wright. Issues like the Savings & Loan Crisis and the C. Boyden Gray III Ethics Flap probably have their merits, too. But while it is theoretically possible to work up some flicker of interest in such people and such matters, they are not the stuff of which gothic drama is made. They are, in a word, boring. They bid fair to put this great city into a sound, untroubled sleep. At such a moment there is only one cure:

Nixon.

The Bushes and the Wrights and even the Reagans come and go, but Richard M. Nixon ye shall always have with ye. The latest of his numberless comebacks takes the form of a new book of old memos, *From: The President, Richard Nixon's Secret Files*, edited by Brude Oudes (Harper & Row). The book is a quick and dirty selection of about a thousand items from the 3.2 million pages of the Nixon White House Special Files opened to the public by the National Archives in 1987. It is not a work of scholarship. The material is simply shoveled in, without context, without a chronology of events, without explanatory notes, and with hardly a clue about the criteria by which the selection was made. But because it's Nixon, it's interesting—proof, if proof were needed, that S&M will always be more fun than S&Ls.

From: The President contains pungent memos by H.R. "Bob" Haldeman, John Ehrlichman, Pat Buchanan, and Chuck Colson—the Four Horsemen of the Nixonian apocalypse—but the best are from the master himself, alone and hunched over his dictaphone far into the night.

The last eight years have made Nixon look good in unexpected ways. Reading his memos, one has to admire his formidable intelligence, his analytic sharpness, his attention to detail, his vast knowledge of politics and government. He fully holds his own in the endless back-and-forth political scheming with his aides, who often mollify and flatter but never patronize him. It's hard to imagine President Bush quietly calling ex-President Reagan for serious political advice. It's easy to imagine him quietly calling ex-President Nixon.

An example of the man's shrewd intelligence: In a long 1969 memo to Haldeman, covering a dozen subjects mostly having to do with golf, Nixon, in an aside, supports the idea of cutting the White House staff. "My feeling is that we had too few people at the beginning and now far too many," he writes. "This is a natural development, but the time to cut out the fat is right now before people get a lot of make-work projects which freeze them in. There is nothing worse than to have people on the staff without enough to do, because they are the ones who inevitably will begin to complain about not having 'access.' "

This is an acute observation about how bureaucracies work. Its peevish suspiciousness is pure Nixon, too—and this is Nixon in a relatively mellow mood. When he gets mad—and he is often apoplectic in these memos—it all spews out: the relentless bile, the tight rage, the total immersion in crabbed resentment that made him such a source of perverse joy to those of us who considered ourselves his enemies. Nixon nurses a resentment like a mother nursing a newborn babe.

His purest hatred is for the press. After the 1971 White House Correspondents dinner, he writes in a 2,500-word screed: "Every one of the recipients was receiving an award for a vicious attack on the Administration—Carswell, wiretapping, Army surveillance, etc. I had to sit there for 20 minutes while the drunken audience laughed in derision as the award citations were read. I'm not a bit thin-skinned, but . . . this disgusting group . . . the type of people who are in the press corps have nothing but contempt for those who get down to their level and who accept such treatment without striking back."

A few days later, in a short memo to Haldeman, he writes that "in this first press conference after the appearance at the White House Correspondents dinner where I played the 'good sport' role the reporters were considerably more bad-mannered and vicious than usual. This bears out my theory that treating them with considerably more contempt is in the long run a more productive policy." The sad thing is that Nixon is probably right about this, though he lacked the personality to get away with it in the long run. It took the genial Ronald Reagan to bring this philosophy of press relations to full fruition.

In 1972, Nixon writes that the coming campaign will be "a vicious, brutal one because the left-wing media. . .will lie, distort and do anything that is necessary to get into power. They never allow their piously held principles to get in the way of their overriding drive to gain and wield power." Great stuff—and, as is so often the case with paranoia, smidgens of truth and dollops of fantasy are mixed on the artist's palette in the service of unconscious self-portraiture.

There is much, much more, directed not only against the press but also against academia, Congress, hippies, peace demonstrators, and the "liberals" on his own staff (such as Leonard Garment, whom Nixon attacks for preferring "offbeat modern ballet like that utterly disgusting group we had from New York for one of our dinners" to more wholesome entertainments).

Space, alas, forbids a proper wallow. But I cannot omit to mention one of the minor characters in this book, a Nixon man who has gone on to greater things.

"We need more Congressmen like Bush!" writes Haldeman in 1969.

In 1970, analyzing Lloyd Bentsen's victory in the Texas Senate race, Colson informs Nixon: "For weeks prior to the election, George Bush was convinced that he had the election won provided no one rocked the boat. He refused to allow us to use some very derogatory information about Bentsen. He resisted any ads—positive or negative—and refused to attack Bentsen." In the margin of this memo, Nixon scrawls, "Probably true."

By 1971 Bush is Nixon's U.N. ambassador, and Colson writes: "We should always consider using George Bush more often as a good speaking resource. He is very good on his feet, he generally can get media attention, he does have Cabinet rank and he takes our line beautifully." And in 1972, when the new Republican National Chairman comes under attack for being too much of a Nixon stooge, Nixon directs his staff: "Get some positive material out on Bush."

Eventually Bush absorbed the message about using "very derogatory information." As a result, some time in the coming year the phone will probably ring in Nixon's home in Saddle River, N.J. The White House operator will put the call through. The next voice Nixon will hear will be that of George Bush: "Mr. President?"

HENDRIK HERTZBERG

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 27, 1989

THEM'S THE BREAKS

George Bush's package of tax proposals confirms his determination to go down in history as a nice guy. It includes a gift for the poor (a child-care tax credit for low-income families) and a gift for the rich (a capital gains tax cut). The trouble is, his gift for the rich would come at the expense of everyone else, including the poor, and would add a distinctly Neanderthal element to the tax code. His gift to the poor, in contrast, is in principle a very good thing. Unfortunately, it's dinky.

The idea of the child-care tax credit arose during the presidential campaign, when Democrats were talking about the need for the government to help working couples pay for day care. Before Michael Dukakis had unequivocally endorsed the big Democratic child-care bill (the Act for Better Child Care), Bush launched a preemptive strike with the tax-credit proposal. The credit, he explained, would go to low-income parents of children under age five, and it would be refundable, which means that parents who don't make enough money to pay taxes would get the credit anyway, in the form of a government check. The idea is an interesting synthesis—liberal in its attention to the needs of poor people, and conservative in its avoidance of "anti-family" incentives for using day-care centers. Whereas the Act for Better Child Care would reimburse only payments made to government-certified day-care providers, the Bush proposal would leave parents free to send their child to the next-door neighbor, to grandma's, or to an in-law's.

Indeed, the amount of the credit would be independent of actual expenditures on child care. Although characterized for political reasons as a child-care proposal, the tax credit is really just an income supplement for poor working families with children. It increases their capacity to buy child care or food or housing or anything else.

And that's a fine thing. It is a welcome step in the direction of making work pay enough to keep a family of three or four out of poverty without public aid, even if wages are low. Only when this goal is reached will poor families have a respectable chance of breaking out of the cycle of dependency. Bush's proposed tax credit—maybe a billion dollars, all told—is much too small to accomplish this goal, but at least it heads in the right direction.

The proposal to reintroduce a special reduced tax rate for capital gains, in contrast, is in every respect a bad dream. One of the major accomplishments of the Tax Reform Act of 1986 was the broadening of the tax base to include previously untaxed income, thereby permitting a sharp reduction of tax rates with no loss of revenue. The upshot was a more equitable, rational tax system. The Bush proposal to tax long-term capital gains at a rate as low as 15 percent (also first laid out during his campaign) would begin the erosion of this achievement.

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Before tax reform, only 40 percent of capital gains on assets held a year or more was subject to tax. With a top-bracket tax rate of 50 percent, taxes on long-term capital gains could not exceed 20 percent. This provision was a bonanza for tax lawyers and accountants, who figured out clever ways to convert income that otherwise would be fully taxable into capital gains. And, needless to say, it was a bonanza for the people with enough money to hire them. In 1985 this loophole excluded from taxation $58 billion—nearly one-fourth of the income of people with adjusted gross incomes of $100,000 or more.

WITH THE Tax Reform Act, the top tax rate was cut from 50 percent to 28 percent without significantly lowering the proportion of tax collected from high-income taxpayers. The key to this trade was the repeal of the capital gains exclusion. Now Bush wants to turn back the clock. He claims that a capital gains tax cut is necessary to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, and that the cut will actually raise tax revenues. This argument, like so many advanced on behalf of special interests, has a gloss of plausibility that fades under even moderate scrutiny.

The claim that revenues will rise rests largely on the assertion that a capital gains cut will make people whose assets have appreciated much more likely to cash them in and realize the capital gain. There are two problems with this assertion: (a) it appears not to be true; (b) if it were true, it wouldn't matter. The best evidence (it comes from Alan Auerbach of the University of Pennsylvania) indicates that, though capital gains realizations do rise immediately after a capital gains tax cut, they don't rise permanently; what's more, they *fall* shortly *before* the cut takes effect. What appears to be happening is that rich people alerted to an impending tax break hold off on cashing in their assets, just as car buyers may hold off on their purchase until the annual markdown. After examining the evidence carefully, the Congressional Budget Office concluded that cutting capital gains rates would reduce capital gains tax revenues by over $4 billion per year after an initial period of adjustment.

And that's not the worst of it. The real question is how a capital gains tax cut would affect total revenues, not just those on capital gains. And the answer is: adversely. The tax cut encourages the wealthy to convert fully-taxable earnings, interest, profits, dividends, and royalties into partly sheltered long-term capital gains. Even if the CBO were wrong, and the proliferation of such deals somehow boosted taxes on capital gains, total tax revenues would probably fall. If the CBO is right, as it probably is, the drop in revenues would be steep.

Bush's second argument—that American investors must be allowed to keep 85 percent of their long-term capital gains, rather than the 72 percent now allowed, if they are to undertake enough risky investments to keep society thriving—is even flimsier than the first. The Reagan administration Treasury Department got it right in 1984, when it justified its call for the elimination of the capital gains exclusion by pointing out that half of venture capital comes from tax-exempt entities: pension funds, endowments, foundations—none of which care a whit about the exclusion. Besides, as the Treasury then noted, if investment projects are unable to pass the market-test of sufficient profitability without concessionary tax treatment, they probably shouldn't be undertaken.

The rich do have a legitimate complaint about the current treatment of capital gains. When they cash in assets that have been sitting around for a long time, much of the "capital gain" may reflect inflation. For that reason, the Treasury in 1984 called for indexing capital gains—adjusting them for inflation. This is only fair, as Congress recognized when it introduced indexing in personal exemptions and income tax brackets. Regrettably, the indexing of capital gains was dropped before the tax reform bill emerged from Congress. It is not too late to correct this omission. But it would be a first-order blunder to begin unraveling the triumph of tax reform by giving in to the special interest group that our current president happens to have been born into.

It goes without saying that this is a bad time in American economic history for the government to be looking for frivolous ways to hand out money. And it is a terrible time in American social history to decide that, for each dollar the government gives to the working poor, it will give several to the rich.

BREATHING ROOM

International concern over the use of chemical weapons is reaching crusade pitch. Recently in Paris, representatives of 140 countries signed a declaration calling for a convention to ban producing, stockpiling and using poison gas. This echoed George Bush's campaign pledge to make it his "solemn mission" to eliminate the threat of chemical war. "If I'm elected, and if I'm remembered for anything, it would be this: a complete and total ban on chemical weapons." Mikhail Gorbachev, meanwhile, began unilaterally preparing to destroy the Soviet chemical-weapons arsenal. Unfortunately, though Gorbachev may have won the p.r. battle, no one's likely to win this war; the goal of entirely eliminating chemical weapons, though laudable, is unreachable.

If George Bush wants America to regain world leadership on moral issues, he would do well to latch onto a more practical proposal. One good candidate was recently put forward by Raymond Cohen and Robin Ranger of the United States Institute of Peace. It aims for something less than the ideal but promises actually to achieve its aims.

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In 1925, in the wake of World War I, an international agreement outlawed first use of chemical arms. For a time, it seemed to be largely successful, though a few nations, such as Italy and Japan, did use them unchallenged. During the Gulf War, the Iraqis pioneered a new, cleaner chemical arms technology. They began loading poison gas into ballistic missiles that carried it over the battle lines and into the Iranian ranks. Apparently satisfied with the results, the Iraqis turned the weapon against unwanted elements of their own population. Photographs of injured and dead soldiers and Kurds, horribly scalded, reminded the world of the indiscriminate savagery of poisoned air. But the Iraqis were the good guys (relatively speaking) in the Iran-Iraq war, so no one made much of a fuss—until the United States announced that the Libyans were building a chemical weapons plant. Then came the outcry.

Between 20 and 30 nations now have the capacity to build the "poor man's atomic bomb," and some (including Iraq) are working to produce biological weapons that would spread diseases such as typhoid and cholera, possibly upgraded through genetic tinkering to resist treatment. Unfortunately, what makes toxic chemicals attractive as weapons also makes them almost unbannable. They are easy to produce, easy to hide, and easy to use. Unlike the fissionable material required for atomic bombs, the components of chemical weapons are widely available (often used in innocuous products like fertilizer). Chemical weapons plants can be converted quickly to harmless Purposes, rendering verification of a ban difficult.

As a result, the lofty goals now driving the Geneva negotiations on chemical weapons will probably prevent any effective international agreement. We will then be left with the free market generously handing out chemical and biological weapons, eventually leaving deterrence through proliferation as our last, best hope. If all goes well, every crackpot government will keep us safe from every other crackpot government. If all doesn't go well, crackpot governments will take turns condemning masses of innocents to slow, excruciating death.

There must be a better way. Ranger, an adjunct scholar at the Heritage Foundation, and Cohen, a professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, propose creating an "International Chemical Weapons Authority" that would monitor the transfer of chemical weapons technology worldwide. (The skeleton of this body—the Australian Group of 19 nations, which meets irregularly to monitor export controls on chemical weapons components and technology—already exists.) The ICWA would offer "insurance" to states that join up, committing themselves not to produce poison gas. In the event that a member were attacked with chemical weapons, the ICWA would supply economic compensation, defensive supplies, such as gas masks, and extensive medical assistance; it would call international attention to the victim's plight; and it would demand sanctions by all members against the attacker. (Sanctions, sadly, were not provided for in the 1925 protocol.) No member state would have veto power in the ICWA, so geopolitics would not hamstring it as they have hamstrung other well-meaning international bodies. Indeed, assuring the autonomy of the ICWA's executive arm would be critical to the group's success.

In theory, all of this—the monitoring and publicizing of chemical arms transfer, aid for victim nations that didn't possess poison gas, sanctions, and the focusing of world indignation on the aggressor—would serve to deter both the spread and use of chemical arms. And even aside from deterrence, the existence of a reliable relief agency would justify the effort. Is there any way that the ICWA could provide a more potent deterrent?

One moderately utopian, but provocative, idea that Ranger and Cohen dropped from their original proposal was that the ICWA would actually provide, as part of its insurance policy, chemical weapons to the victimized nation commensurate with the original attack. Such a proposal would face enormous political obstacles—not least the noble condemnation of *all* chemical weapons use by many nations—but if realized it would go a long way toward the best of both worlds: genuine deterrence without the proliferation of chemical weapons. Just imagine that you were commanding Iraq's forces, and you knew that every time you delivered a good dose of poison gas to Iran, Iran would get handed a like amount of poison gas, complete with delivery system, by an international agency that possessed an immense supply of the stuff. It might be enough to make you think twice.

Even without this stick, ICWA could set an important precedent for potent international cooperation. It would establish a mechanism that, in time, might even evolve into something capable of enforcing the total ban on chemical weapons that the negotiators at Geneva may finally hammer out.

Between unveiling an American proposal for banning chemical weapons at Geneva in 1984 and pledging no more gasses in 1988, Bush cast the tiebreaking vote in the Senate to jump-start American chemical weapons production in 1986. It's time to pick a policy that makes sense and stick to it. For starters, he could put Ranger's and Cohen's proposal on the table at Geneva. It's an imperfect idea, but this is an imperfect world.

THE RIGHT STUFF

> What are the goals of our policy toward Nicaragua? They are the goals the Nicaraguan people set for themselves in 1979: democracy, a free economy, and national self-determination. Clearly the best way to achieve these goals is through a negotiated settlement. No humane person wants to see suffering and war. . .The United States will support any negotiated settlement that will bring about real democracy in Nicaragua. What we will not support is a paper agreement that sells out the Nicaraguan people's right to be free. That kind of agreement would be unworthy of us as a people.

Those words were uttered by Ronald Reagan in a television speech on June 24, 1986. We do not know whether

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Reagan really meant them. But the speech was written for him by a man who did mean them: Bernard Aronson, a Democrat who has just been proposed as the Bush administration's assistant secretary of state for Latin America. If Ronald Reagan had conducted his administration's Central America policy in keeping with Aronson's words, he might have won national support for it. That is the whole idea behind the Aronson appointment: to fashion a new policy that will advance and sustain democracy in the hemisphere and will attract the support of Congress and the American people. The Bush administration has started down that road. Instead of asking Congress for renewed military aid for the *contras*, it will seek humanitarian aid to keep the *contras* alive and then try to achieve a political settlement with Nicaragua. It has also welcomed the first-ever indication by Communist rebels in El Salvador that they might be willing to take part in an election.

These are deft political steps, but Aronson will be more than a conciliatory bridge to Congress. He is not just a Democrat (a former White House aide under Jimmy Carter), but a democrat of courage and principle. In the early 1970s, as was recorded in the acclaimed documentary *Harlan County, U.S.A.*, Aronson helped organize dissident miners in Appalachia in a sometimes bloody struggle against the corrupt, violent rule of United Mineworkers' boss Tony Boyle. He demonstrated his political courage by writing a principled speech for a Republican president at a time when support for the *contras* was anathema among Democrats. President Reagan may or may not have been sincere when he admitted in his 1986 speech that financial and human rights abuses by the *contras* "have occurred in the past" and "they are intolerable," but we are confident that Aronson was.

Aronson's selection has been criticized by far right-wingers, among them Senator Jesse Helms, but that is only a badge of honor. It has also been criticized by some Senate moderates—largely at the instigation of a disgruntled former Reagan campaign official, William Perry, who favored another candidate for the job—on grounds that Aronson doesn't speak Spanish and lacks experience with South America issues. We'd encourage Aronson to learn Spanish. We're sure he will master the complexities of Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, and Peru. The major task of all those countries, however, is to sustain democracy by alleviating the debt burden. On debt, we anticipate that Aronson will do Democratic work in a Republican administration, convincing it that Latin economies cannot grow and maintain stable government while paying out massive percentages of their GDP to foreign banks.

It's true what his critics say, though: Aronson probably will concentrate on his specialty, Central America. He ought to. A crisis is brewing over El Salvador, and the left would like to see the United States founder over El Salvador just as it did over Nicaragua—divided and defeated. It will be Aronson's job to see that this doesn't happen. We think he is the man to do it.

NOTEBOOK

❑ MARIE SYRKIN, who died last week, lived a long life of loves. Democracy, Zionism, literature, education: she embraced them all with a constancy that spanned decades, wars, ideas, languages. The daughter of Nachman Syrkin, the itinerant intellectual who founded Socialist Zionism (when Marie remembered "Papa," a whole, lost world of argument and agitation was recovered), she came to the United States in 1908. Her first job was teaching high school, and making propaganda for a democratic ideal of education in America. She translated Yiddish verse, and wrote prolifically. At Brandeis, where she taught English literature, and in the company of her husband, the poet Charles Reznikoff, her pleasures from poems were contagious. In 1943, at the *Jewish Frontier*, she published the first extended report of the Final Solution. She was already a committed Zionist. For half a century, this free, slight, indefatigable, humane woman taught her brethren a great deal about the need of nationalism for liberalism, about the tempering of pride with decency, of action with contemplation. She was fierce in her love of her people, and in her determination to assist in the securing of its future, but she never flinched from self-criticism, or from the criticism of her community. She was a cherished contributor to these pages. We will miss her sober pen, her vivid mind, her dancing eyes, her fortifying heart.

❑ A MAN FOR ALL NATIONS: Ours has not exactly been an age of heroes. Of the few there are, most have emerged from the prison houses of the totalitarian states: people like Nelson Mandela, Lech Walesa, Andrei Sakharov, Natan Sharansky. Of course, Sharansky no longer lives in the Soviet Union. After nine years of an unusually bitter detention he was reunited with his wife and his people in Israel. Now there is news from Jerusalem that he may be appointed Israel's ambassador to the United Nations. It is an inspired choice, and like most inspired choices it has caused dismay among the habitually fearful. Some say his presence at the U.N. may agitate the Russians and obstruct the re-establishment of full diplomatic relations between Moscow and Jerusalem. This is nonsense: Soviet diplomacy is neither motivated nor circumscribed by sentiment. Like the diplomacies of all the powers, it is a function of necessities and opportunities. In any case, allowing Sharansky to emigrate in 1987 was, if not the first, then the most vivid harbinger of *glasnost* to come. Others fret that Sharansky hasn't the training or the disposition for the international civil service. In our view, this is an asset. The big world forum on the East River in New York does not need another practitioner of that strange mixture of finesse and bluster that somehow passes for statesmanship these days. He would be an altogether unique figure at the U.N., a man who has suffered in both mind and body the lash of tyrants and who has lived to experience the exultation of free-

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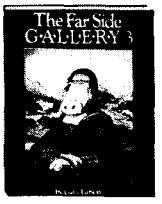

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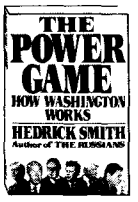

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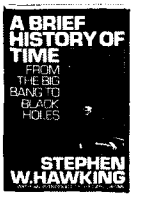

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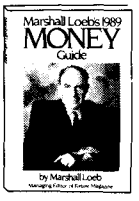

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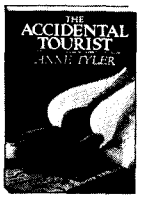

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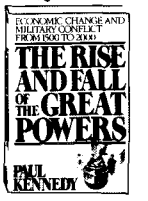

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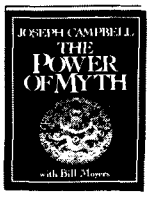

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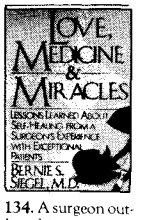

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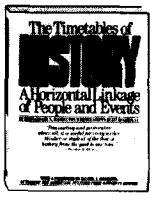

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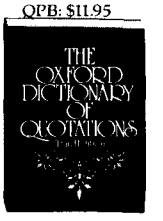

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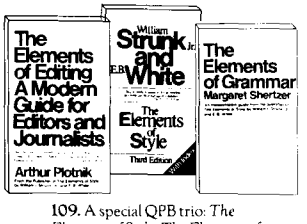

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dom. He may be the single most morally alert public figure of our time, and he is keenly alert to the grievance of the Palestinians. Formal speeches aside, the main audience of Israel's U.N. ambassador is the American public; he is, after all, Israel's nuncio to "Nightline." There is no one who could more effectively articulate the essential interests and long-term concerns of Israel as it faces the coming uncertainties. And there is no one, certainly, who understands as well the stake the largest true democracy in the world and the smallest share in the career of freedom and peace within their borders and beyond.

NUKE THE WHALES: "Ollie and Betsy North Need Your Help *Now*," begins the ad that ran recently in the *American Spectator*. What ingrates the legal authorities are. "After 5½ years at the National Security Council where he worked so hard to rescue hostages, combat terrorism, and fight communism," reads the ad, "Ollie North was thanked for his service by an indictment. . . ." Hold on. Rescue hostages *and* combat terrorism? Wasn't there some controversy over the connection between the two? Well, anyway, now Ollie's fighting an even bigger battle against "an Independent Counsel with unlimited funds, 30 attorneys, and 50 investigators." (The *New York Times* says 15 full-time lawyers, five federal agents, and one tax investigator, but who's counting?) "It's a battle that North will win, but he needs your help now to defray legal costs and to assure that his family is properly guarded and that no harm comes to them." (Apparently the $13,800 home security system that was partly paid for with proceeds from the Iran arms sale didn't do the trick.) Beneath a poignant photo of Ollie and supportive wife Betsy is a donation form (Visa and MasterCard accepted) addressed to the NORTH DEFENSE TRUST. Readers can expedite the process by mailing the money directly to another needy patriot, Brendan V. Sullivan Jr., who has already pulled down an estimated $3 million in legal fees from the North case. Or they can turn the page.

□ AFGHANISCRAM: Wait a minute. We lost in Vietnam, so we vacated the embassy. We won in Afghanistan, so we're vacating the embassy. Secretary of State James Baker's recent decision to close the Kabul embassy spoke volumes, both about the ferocity of the fighting to come and the lack of real control the United States has over the *mujaheddin* groups it has supported for the past decade. If after ousting Najibullah's pro-Soviet regime, the various religious and tribal factions fall to fighting among themselves, the United States won't be able to do much except sit back and watch the fur fly. And what with the almost $2 billion worth of U.S.-supplied weaponry floating around (not to mention a comparable Soviet contribution), it promises to be quite a show.

□ ALLIANCE FOR PROGRESS:

"I thought he showed an ability to understand the political reality of Latin America. He seemed open to our information."

—Daniel Ortega on Dan Quayle,
quoted in the *Washington Post*, February 4

"We expect them to work toward the elimination of human rights, elimination of human rights in accordance with the pursuit of justice."

—Dan Quayle on Latin America,
quoted in the *New York Times*, same day

□ THE MISSING LINK:

QUAYLE PAYS VISIT TO SAN SALVADOR

He Declines to Link U.S. Aid Directly to Human Rights
—*New York Times*, February 4

Aid to Salvador linked to rights, Quayle says
—*Boston Globe*, same day

□ GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS, NO NEWS:

In Markets, 3 Cheers for the New Man

"After an initial burst of anxiety immediately after his election, the financial markets have greeted the ascendancy of George Bush to the White House with a joy bordering on euphoria."

—*International Herald Tribune*, January 21

Markets Take Bush in Stride

"Currency markets and Wall Street showed little reaction to George Bush's swearing-in as president, and currency dealers said his inaugural address had been mainly neutral for the dollar."

—same paper, same day, same page

Bob Michel's minority complex.

LITTLE BIG MAN

THE HOUSE of Representatives had but one alternative to Jim Wright when it met in January to elect a speaker for the 101st Congress: Bob Michel, the affable Republican from Peoria, Illinois. As expected, Michel took a trouncing that day, his fifth such defeat in a row. "I bear no ill will," he said afterwards. "The numbers were just not there, and I thank my Republican colleagues for honoring me, again, as their ill-fated candidate." In deference to House traditions, Michel then presented Wright to the House and smiled patiently through Wright's long and unctuous thank-you speech. This may sound like a painful ordeal, but Michel is used to ritual humiliation. It's his job.

Locked out of power by an increasingly cocky Democratic majority since 1954, House Republicans are given to see-

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ing themselves as a persecuted minority. Minority Leader Michel plays the chief martyr, never passing up a chance to remind people what it's like to be bullied by Jim Wright and Majority Whip Tony Coelho. "[M]y 32 years in the House have all been spent in the minority," he pointed out (again) in a recent speech to fellow Republicans. "I wouldn't wish that on any of you." The image of Michel—a portly 65-year-old with a kind face—peeping out from the back in group photos of congressional leaders has become the very symbol of Republican impotence. But if you look closely, you'll see that he doesn't look too depressed.

For all the public sympathy he attracts, Michel never seems to get credit in print for being a great minority leader, partly because it sounds kind of insulting. But it's true. His avuncular personality (not to mention a first-class singing voice, put to frequent use) equip him for the minority leader's basic role as a middleman between the two competing parties. The position means he catches fire from both ends: back-bench Republicans who want more verbal assaults on Wright, and colleagues in the Democratic leadership who think he is too political. Michel's tendency to appease the latter group at the expense of the former has gotten him in trouble at times. But overall, he has performed well in a notoriously unstable job. Of Michel's four immediate predecessors, arguably only Gerald Ford left the job on peaceful terms with his colleagues.

When Michel isn't reveling in the role of perennial loser, he spends his time swearing that he hopes young Republican colleagues will be spared the same fate. In fact, he has a scheme to keep it from happening: Project Majority, a recently unveiled master plan for reclaiming the House from the Democrats by 1992. Never mind that it takes masochistic satisfaction in the fact that "the current Republican Leader has the dubious distinction of having served longer without interruption in minority status than any other Republican in the history of the country and being beaten in more consecutive elections for Speaker than any other Leader." Never mind that the thought of Michel actually beating Wright in one of those speaker votes is altogether incongruous. "The time for reform is here," Michel declared last December. "Now's the time for us as House Republicans to let Jim Wright know that this is our House, too, and we shall earn the right and the privilege to lead it into the 21st century."

THE MAIN new strategy of the leaner, meaner Bob Michel is what the *New York Times* has called "an aggressive guerrilla war around the issue of ethics." After calling the House's ethics enforcement "a national disgrace" in his December tirade, Michel published an op-ed piece in the *Times*, under the banner "This House Needs Cleaning," in which he called for "a bipartisan commission on House reform, focusing on ethics and campaign financing." With Jim Wright humbled by an in-House ethics investigation, this plan has obvious political advantages, and Wright has been cornered into endorsing the idea.

But there's a problem with staking Michel's, and his party's, future to a campaign for goodness in government. Next to Wright, Michel may look like clean Gene (how many people don't?), but the truth is that he is every bit as much a creature of the House, with all that implies. Michel's recent repudiation of honoraria, for example, doesn't exactly mesh with his lifestyle. He pocketed $28,750 in honoraria fees in 1987, more than any other House member (seven representatives made more, but they kept less). The Tobacco Institute solicited two speeches from him in seven weeks that year, providing $4,000 for his time and picking up the tab for three days' lodging in Palm Springs. The minority leader is very popular on the charity golf tourney circuit, where someone usually loads him down with a few hundred dollars worth of "clothing and accessories" and springs for lodging for him and Mrs. Michel. In 1987 Michel made it to the Bob Hope Desert Classic in January, the Kemper Open in June, and the Jerry Ford Invitational in August.

Michel's zeal to abolish political action committees could prove especially embarrassing. The *Times* piece didn't mention that its author placed number one in the Federal Election Commission's latest table of congressional PAC money collectors, which covered the January 1987-October 1988 period. (Project Majority calls for "improving the relationship we have with political action committees," unless of course "it is deemed in our best interests to seek the elimination of PACs.") Michel has more to lose from offending PACdom than most members: unusually for an unindicted incumbent, he has had a couple of fairly close calls defending his seat. Last November his Peoria constituents gave him only 55 percent of the vote, a slim margin by congressional standards. His opponent's pollster found that about half of Michel's constituents feel ignored by a representative heavily involved in Washington politics.

EVEN WITHOUT the hypocrisy problem, Michel's strategy of trying to whip up support for in-House reforms in the country at large, conceived years ago by his critics in the Conservative Opportunity Society, is questionable. The issue of House rules, which Michel has gotten quite excited over in his term as leader, is not something "that strikes at the heart of most people," notes Representative Tom Tauke, the GOP moderate who led the revolt against the congressional pay raise, "nor the sort of issue that forces people to change their votes."

Aside from its ironic emphasis on ethics, Project Majority consists mainly of exhortations to do better; it amounts to a self-help manual for habitual political losers. For example, the master plan urges its readers to change from "opposition conservatism to governing conservatism," from "a minority mentality to a majority mentality," from "minimizing risk to maximizing benefit." Also, "create language which clearly defines the Republican message." And "create political themes and messages which clearly define who House Republicans are." In sum: be all that you can be, get high on life, and don't forget—that glass of water is one-quarter full, not three-quarters empty. Michel's manifesto also recommends that Republicans get outside the beltway and see the world—make that crucial transformation from

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"Washington politics to American life."

Of course, the real question for Michel is what he would do if, by virtue of some political earthquake or divine intervention, Republicans *did* become the majority anytime soon. His political success to date, such as it is, comes down to a phenomenal capacity for listening to the plaints of frustrated congressmen. Colleagues say his constant refrain is, "Tell me how I can be helpful. Tell me what I can do."

A former congressman, in what must be one of the year's best oxymorons, calls Michel's assertive new strategy "the Lee Atwater-Bob Michel approach." Will Michel snap out of it once the current session gets under way, and return to his well-worn ways? Most people think so. "Bob knows what's right and he knows what needs to be done," predicts Coelho. Michel could learn something from Fisher Ames, the disarmingly frank member of the first Congress he has been quoting a lot lately to back up his calls for reforming the House. "The House is composed of sober, solid folks," Ames observed. "There are few geniuses." There is no better explanation of why Bob Michel, if he just keeps quiet and keeps smiling for those congressional group shots, could go down in history as the finest minority leader in the history of the nation.

ZACHARY CITRON

How Reagan blew the pay raise.

ONE FOR THE GYPPER

BLAME ED MEESE. This hasn't occurred to House Speaker Jim Wright yet as an alibi for his failure to win a pay increase for members of Congress, federal judges, Cabinet members, and senior bureaucrats. But it may. There's at least an arguable case that Meese, long gone from the Justice Department, was responsible. Not that he tried to kill the pay raise when it was proposed by a federal commission last December. Meese, now a fellow at the Heritage Foundation and a newspaper columnist, didn't intervene this time. But the impact of his earlier support of pay raises, voiced in January 1987, lingered with President Reagan two years later. And Reagan, as his last major act as president, endorsed the full 51 percent salary hike recommended by the commission. As it turned out, that doomed it.

In 1987 the case Meese made to Reagan in support of a full pay raise was simple: you've got to protect your judicial legacy. The real Reagan revolution is the one judges in the federal courts will produce, Meese insisted. (In eight years, Reagan appointed just over half the current federal judges, 385 of 761.) That revolution, he said, is in jeopardy because judges are paid so little compared to what they'd make as lawyers in private practice. To keep Reaganites on the bench, to prevent vacancies that a less conservative president would fill, a whopping boost in salary was needed, even if undeserving senators, House members, and bureaucrats also got raises. In 1987, at the last minute, Reagan was persuaded to settle for a smaller, more politically palatable increase, which passed. This time, he remembered Meese's case and went with a bigger raise. It turned out to be too much for the public, and thus Congress, to swallow. So blame Meese.

WHEN IT worked up its recommendation last fall, the Commission on Executive, Legislative and Judicial Salaries was well aware of Reagan's anxiety over judges. By law, the commission reports to the president, who then sends a pay proposal to Congress. Unless both the Senate and House vote the increase down, it goes into effect. The commission, in its 56-page report, played on Reagan's anxiety. Included were heartrending tales from judges about the difficulty of supporting their families. John Duncan, a Republican appointee who stepped down in 1985, said he knew "that if I entered private practice I could afford to educate our youngest daughter, repair our house, my wife could retire, and, finally, my earnings are somewhat comparable to the income earned by a number of law school classmates and many of the lawyers I have trained." The report also noted that 30 percent of federal judges planned to quit before retirement. "Judges appointed since 1980, with only five to eight years experience on the bench, are more likely than those with longer judicial experience levels to resign their seats and return to private life," it said.

The man who crafted this shrewd appeal to Reagan was Lloyd Cutler, the Washington lawyer enlisted as commission chairman in early 1988. Cutler did all the behind-the-scenes spadework. He checked with the congressional leadership to see if the large raise the commission urged two years ago would get through Congress this time. The answer was yes. (House Speaker Jim Wright guessed wrong.) Cutler asked Kenneth Duberstein, Reagan's chief of staff, if the commission should put some fat in the increase for Reagan to cut out before sending a proposal to Congress. Just recommend what you think is appropriate, Duberstein told Cutler.

Cutler met with Reagan in the Oval Office for 30 minutes on December 14. He explained that the salary hike proposed by the commission would not quite make up for inflation since 1969. Reagan seized on this. "This isn't a pay increase," he said. "It's an adjustment for inflation, even less than a full adjustment." Cutler stressed the plight of judges. Back in 1987, Meese had made the point that Reagan's judges were younger than earlier appointees. "As a result, most of them have kids in college," Meese said in a recent interview, recounting what he'd told Reagan. "This creates a situation that, with the lower purchasing power, makes it hard for them to take the job in the first place or keep the job." Reagan was persuaded in 1987, and he was persuaded again last December, even without Meese's being there to argue the case.

There was a wrinkle. Reagan is an avid reader of *Human Events*, the conservative weekly. Just before he left for Cali-

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fornia on December 23, it featured on the front page an article entitled, "Stop the Pay Hike." The piece pointed out the congressional liberals—Teddy Kennedy, Howard Metzenbaum, etc.—who'd get hefty pay increases under the commission's plan. And it took on the issue of judges. "Though the commission points with alarm to the resignations of 57 judges since 1974, that's fewer than four per year out of more than 1,000 on the federal bench—an annual attrition rate of less than half a percent." Reagan was taken aback, and he showed the article to aides.

Duberstein, who supported the pay increase but didn't lobby Reagan for it, assigned his assistant John Tuck to analyze the article. Tuck responded with a briefing paper for Reagan to read on Air Force One en route to California. The paper said most of those who'd get raises are in the administration, not Congress. It declared that judges are quitting as never before, and added that while Reagan had appointed half the federal judiciary, President Bush has a chance to pick another quarter. Tuck encapsulated the argument this way: "The thing we'd worked so hard for—getting our judges on the bench—would be very, very difficult to sustain" without the full pay raise. Reagan was a believer again. When he returned to the White House on January 6, he ordered the 51 percent increase. What's more, he harped on the matter in his next-to-last Saturday radio chat. "Federal judges are leaving the bench in record numbers, partly because they're paid less than junior members of some law firms," he said.

BY THE TIME Bush was inaugurated, the pay raise was extraordinarily unpopular. Public opinion was running 9-to-1 against it. This presented the Bush White House with an interesting political opportunity. Though as vice president he'd said he supported Reagan's view, Bush could jump to the populist position and attack the pay raise. He'd surely be able to defeat the hike, but there would be a downside. He'd sour his relations with Congress. Bush never seriously considered the populist option. His budget director, Richard Darman, was for the full increase. His legal counsel, Boyden Gray, was too. His treasury secretary and pal, Nicholas Brady, not only was for it, but in his farewell address in the Senate in 1982, had appealed for higher pay for officialdom. The only skeptical voice was Chief of Staff John Sununu's.

Sununu was worried about where the money for higher White House salaries would come from. Cutler had consulted the budget office months earlier and found that large agencies could offset the pay hike by cutting elsewhere. But the White House was a small operation with a $9 million budget. Already it had been forced to come up with $1 million for unused leave accumulated by Reagan aides. Then it had to pay a four percent cost-of-living hike to most personnel. And the White House had lost all its detailees from other agencies, thanks to the efforts of Democratic Representative Pat Schroeder of Colorado. Sununu feared that Bush would be criticized for sending up a supplemental budget request to pay higher staff salaries. And without a supplement, clerical workers would have to be laid off to accommodate the higher wages of senior officials. But Sununu was assured by congressional leaders that a special appropriation would sail through, so Bush strongly endorsed a full raise as "overdue" at his January 27 press conference.

Assurances from Capitol Hill turned out to be worthless. For example, Wright had assured everyone that he'd hold off a vote in the House and let the raise go into effect automatically. He buckled, and the raise was voted down overwhelmingly February 7. Wright took a lot of heat for this, but he had been put in an untenable position by the White House. True, he could have told Reagan to send up a smaller pay increase or asked Bush to pare the hike Reagan had urged. He didn't do either. But the White House could have shown a little political foresight by doing that on its own. It didn't. Duberstein and Tuck felt there'd be the same public reaction regardless of the size of the proposed hike. Cutler thought the same. The Bush crowd didn't give it much thought.

The 1987 experience should have taught them all a lesson. Back then, Donald Regan, the White House chief of staff, got the final word with Reagan on the pay raise in a one-on-one session. This was important because on non-ideological issues Reagan ordinarily sided with the last person he spoke to. Regan told him the Meese idea was fine, but a big pay hike just wouldn't fly politically. So instead of boosting congressional salaries 50 percent, Reagan sent up a 10 percent hike. It cleared Congress. What would have happened in 1987 if Regan hadn't horned in and Reagan had gone with Meese's advice? Now we know.

FRED BARNES

It just won't be the same.

LIFE WITHOUT LAROUCHE

ON JANUARY 28 political extremist Lyndon H. LaRouche Jr. was sentenced to 15 years in prison for mail fraud and tax evasion. Since 1983, LaRouche's group had solicited millions in loans from private individuals (many of them the "elderly female retirees" of bilking lore) whom, it was shown in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., LaRouche never intended to repay. LaRouche had not filed a tax return since the early '70s, claiming he owed no taxes because he received no salary, only "expenses." These were paid by companies LaRouche owned. Along with all of life's necessities, they included extras such as a 200-acre Leesburg, Va., estate and (to those of us who pay $15 a pop, this one really rankles) LaRouche's nifty, salon-style haircut.

It's clear what all this means for LaRouche, who is now in Alexandria City Jail awaiting transfer to a federal prison. Bowl trims. And for a while at least, no more presidential

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bids. But the question of note to all U.S. airport patrons is: Will those bug-eyed LaRouche people still be around, explaining how Kissinger, the Pope, the Queen of England, and the International Swiss Drug Cartel are using "attack mosquitos" to spread the AIDS epidemic worldwide? Probably. LaRouchians are a resilient bunch who thrive on societal disfavor. As John Mintz put it in a 1987 *Washington Post* article, "LaRouche's followers denounce every critic—prosecutors, politicians, people at the airport who disagree with them—as cretins, communists, traitors or homosexuals. . . . They think LaRouche is the planet's only chance for survival—and people must be crazed not to accept him." At the Alexandria trial, former LaRouchian Charles Tate described how LaRouche's fund-raising chief, William Wertz, would psyche up telephone solicitors with zesty readings of poems by Gen. George Patton.

IN SHORT, LaRouchians aren't the kind of people to throw up their hands and say, "Fair enough, feds. You win." On sentencing day in Alexandria, a lively support crew was on hand with signs explaining that LaRouche is being set up for assassination by the Justice Department. There was also a makeshift a cappella choir singing 19th-century Germanic songs, battle hymns and civil-rights anthems. When I called LaRouche spokeswoman Dana Scanlon, she promised a worldwide outburst of such protests. "It's already started! I just got off the phone with someone in Germany. A man in Bonn has chained himself to the gates of the Münsterplatz. His name is *Andreas . . . Ranke . . . Heinemann.* He's the grandson of. . ." This went on for a minute. Trying to bait her, I asked if the group expects lean fund-raising times now that its führer is a jailbird and the government is suing for some of the cash he stole from little old ladies.

With a sort of why-dwell-on-downers sigh, she said, "Hey, if I sat around worrying about things like that, I just wouldn't get a whole lot done."

Fine, LaRouchians. I have just one request. As long as you're not going away yet, please husband your resources carefully. If the pinch *is* felt, cut back on your publications (there are many overlapping LaRouche newspapers and magazines), and don't underfund one of Washington's great institutions: The LaRouchian "Human Rights Violations" press conferences. These, always conducted by LaRouche subalterns, usually deal (better make that *dealt*—chillingly, there hasn't been one since LaRouche's December 17 conviction) with the government's "Human Rights Violations" of you-know-who. Scanlon says no such meetings are "scheduled at this time." That's too bad, because if these disappear it means the loss of one of journalism's most savory experiences: a press conference, with all the trimmings, at which one is almost certain to be the only reporter present. Luckily, before it was too late, I attended the group's December 14 event at the National Press Building.

It's cheap to dwell on the contrast between LaRouchians as billed (in his autobiography, LaRouche describes them as "golden souls" destined to save the world for us "poor sheep") and LaRouchians up close and personal. But they force my hand. As I waited for an elevator in the NPB lobby, that morning's honchos marched glumly in, displaying all the unmistakable style clues: the fish-belly skin tone, the dark eye circles, and the sports jackets that hang as gently as formica sandwich boards. That I expected. What I didn't expect was that two of the golden souls (tall, burly guys) would gang up on the third golden soul (a little, skinny guy) in a way usually seen only in junior high gym class.

You know the dynamic. The skinny guy was last to get on the elevator, so Hefty Guy 1 pushed the CLOSE DOOR button just in time to give him a "torso compacter," then said, "Oh! *Sorry*." As the elevator lurched into motion, Skinny regained his composure, hitched his pants, sniffed à la Barney Fife, and stepped over to a posting of upcoming National Press Club lunch speakers. "Wellllll," he exhaled, "let's see if they have anybody . . . of *interest*." The other two rolled their eyes. "Nnn-nope." The elevator stopped on floor 12. We were heading for 13, but Skinny erred and strode out resolutely. The Hefties (charitably, I must admit) called him back, but he waved them off, pretending to have "business" on the floor. The Hefties grinned steadily until we got out on 13, and the three of us walked in silence (in keeping with my sheep status, I was not acknowledged) to the designated conference room.

I TOOK ONE of many, many available seats. (For a while I was the entire audience, but a LaRouche photographer and another observer later showed up.) For the next five minutes the two now-all-business Hefties worried over water jugs and papers. Skinny returned from his hike and got a prompt knuckle rap. "Has this man signed the sign-up sheet? NO? Well get it!" He did, I signed in, Skinny took his seat and announced, "So! Without further ado I guess we should. . ." But the Hefties gunned him down ("We'll *wait* for late arrivals") and five agonizing minutes of silence oozed by. Then the Hefties, addressing spaces over my head all the while, served the meat of the press conference: A Chicago convention of Food for Peace (this is a LaRouche farmer-recruitment organization that operates mainly in the Midwest) had issued a resolution the previous weekend to stop the KGB-Justice Department frame-up of LaRouche, "the third Socrates."After this there was a discussion of Food for Peace's policy, which sounded like a standard call for increased global food production until Hefty 1 summed up: "Once again, our position is this: There *has* to be a rapid increase in worldwide food production—and anybody who tells you otherwise is a liar and a murderer."

After that I tuned out until the big moment at press conference's end, when Hefty 1 cleared his throat, surveyed the room and said, "We are now prepared to take your questions." I sportingly asked, "What documentation do you have to prove the KGB-slash-DOJ murder plot?" The convincing answer: "Ohhh, ho ho! We're sure all right."

On my way out I discovered that a fourth LaRouchian had arrived and set up a long table that was groaning under a load of LaRouche books and publications. Pointing at a

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magazine I asked, "Can I have one of these?" He gave me a long look. Then he narrowed his eyes, nodded knowingly and said, "Sure."

ALEX HEARD

Alex Heard is a free-lance writer in Washington.

Among the anti-Semites in Japan.

DAVID AND GODZILLA

"THE JEWS own all the 'seven sisters.' They control agriculture in America and the international precious metals market. Both George Bush and Michael Dukakis are related to Jews."

Those words were spoken last September by Masaaki Nakayama, then Japan's Posts and Telecommunications minister and still, believe it or not, the best Japanese friend that Israel and the Jews have. Nakayama, one of the country's most powerful political players, serves as secretary-general of the Japan-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Association. He explains: "I am trying to educate my fellow Japanese that even though there is only one Israel against 22 Arab nations, if you bash Israel, you are actually bashing 14.5 million Jews all over the world."

Most Japanese have never met a Jew (there are only 150 Jewish families in Japan), they don't know what one is, and for the most part, they don't care. But in recent Japanese books, many of them best sellers, Jews have been held responsible for the rising value of the yen, trade disputes, Japan-bashing, the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, even AIDS. Fundamentally, today's Jewish-book boom has less to do with profound anti-Semitism than with a deep-seated Japanese xenophobia and Japan's current financial ills. But it coincides with continuing support by most of Japanese officialdom for the Arab economic boycott of Israel and with continuing avoidance of even the most cursory political connections to Israel. Most major Japanese companies still refuse outright to do business with Israel, a result of a perceived dependency on Arab oil and of threats from Arab nations that any company trading with Israel cannot also deal in the Arab market. Now that Jews in America and elsewhere have put two and two together, Japanese officials are doing what they always do when facing a crisis: staging an elaborate public relations program designed to tell their critics whatever they want to hear.

A look at the cyclical history of anti-Semitism in Japan attests to its weak hold on the national character. During the 1930s, amid a militaristic backlash against all things Western, a particularly vicious cycle of anti-Semitism saw the Jews blamed for diluting Japan's spiritual ideals. But although one of the wartime Axis powers, Japan did not subscribe to Hitler's anti-Jewish doctrines. In the summer of 1940, Senpo Sugihara, the Japanese consul in Kovno, Lithuania, issued at great personal risk more than 5,000 transit visas to Jews fleeing oncoming Nazi troops. Less altruistically, the Japanese also initiated a pre-war project called the Fugu plan to develop a Jewish community in Japanese-controlled Manchuria as a buffer against the Soviet Union. Although the plan fell through, 20,000 to 30,000 European Jews did manage to find safe haven in Japan and 99 percent of them survived the war.

The latest anti-Semitic wave to hit Japan broke in early 1986, when the Japanese economy was just beginning to reel under the impact of an appreciating yen. An obscure Japanese author and self-proclaimed Christian minister, Masami Uno, released the first of three best-selling books claiming that an international Jewish conspiracy was secretly plotting the destruction of the Japanese economy en route to the Jews' stated goal of world domination. (These books—all ghostwritten for Uno by an equally obscure Tokyo editor, Teruo Takahashi—together have sold more than 1.5 million copies.) At the center of the conspiracy, Uno explained, were four great "Jewish" families—the Mellons, Rockefellers, Du Ponts and Morgans. He also blames other famous Jews, like former Saudi Arabian Oil Minister Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani. Uno says he realizes that the Mellons, Rockefellers and the sheikh are not Jewish, but feels such misinformation is essential to convey a higher truth—the imminent danger facing his country. Lacking much first-hand information, the Japanese have read his books and believed them. Other writers have jumped on the bandwagon.

Cheaply bound and inexpensive by Japanese standards, more than 80 books about Jews are now available in Tokyo bookstores. Not all the books, of course, deal with Jewish conspiracy theories. But those that do typically characterize the Jews as being organized, shrewd, powerful, and able to manipulate international political and economic forces for their own gain. In effect, the Japanese have accused the Jews of beating them at their own game. For that reason, the Japanese do not see the books as inherently anti-Semitic, and among their most eager buyers have been middle- and high-ranking company employees. Den Fujita, the dynamic president of the McDonald's hamburger chain in Japan, proudly calls himself the "Jew of Ginza." In his book, *Jewish Business Methods: Controlling the Economy of the World*, Fujita explains how Japan "is being ravaged by a pack of Jews" and then concludes that his fellow Japanese should emulate Jewish business practices.

IN PART because of the influence of former Minister Nakayama and others of his ilk, and in part because of a series of visits by concerned Jewish leaders and politicians, Japan launched a public relations campaign about two years ago to curry goodwill with the American Jewish community. Japanese officials are worried that American Jewry will join hands with Capitol Hill's Japan-bashers or, even worse, stop buying Japanese goods. A legion of Japanese diplomats, sporting Brooks Brothers suits and Ivy League degrees, has set out to convince American Jews that

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Japan's treatment of Israel and Jews has been exemplary. The Japanese Foreign Ministry has even drawn up a fact sheet on the "American Jewish problem," with quick responses to questions often raised by Jews. But the answers they provide—that Tokyo bookstores, for example, no longer have Jewish "corners"—are often patent falsehoods. And often these soothing explanations have been swallowed whole by American Jewish organizations, who are competing to claim credit for influencing the Japanese and like to believe their programs are working.

Western intelligence agents in the Far East, meanwhile, have for some time been investigating possible ties between author Uno and the well-funded Arab propaganda effort in Japan. The agents' suspicions were reinforced in December 1987 when Uno visited Tunis, headquarters of the PLO and an unusual destination for a Christian minister. Uno went after receiving an invitation, written on official government stationery, from the Japanese Embassy in Tunis. Just three months earlier Japan's then-Foreign Minister Tadashi Kuranari had issued a statement condemning Uno's book as irresponsible. The statement was hand-delivered to Jewish leaders in the United States but failed to appear in a single Japanese-language newspaper; Foreign Ministry officials had "unofficially" informed the local press that the statement was designed for overseas consumption.

Even in the midst of the Japanese-Jewish p.r. effort, the official kowtowing to the Arabs continues. The Japanese government has refused to cooperate in investigating whether the books are being funded and/or directed by the extensive Arab network in Japan. Last year, when a pack of Arab ambassadors in Tokyo descended on Foreign Minister Sosuke Uno after he announced that he would become the first Japanese minister ever to visit Israel, Uno quickly issued a statement in Tokyo saying that: "The trip in no way signals a change in Japan's pro-Arab Middle East policy." But in the United States the same Foreign Ministry was promoting the June 1988 trip to American Jews as a "milestone in Japanese-Jewish relations."

What happens next? For Jews, it's a no-win situation. If the Japanese come to realize that the books are inaccurate, the Jews stand to lose their image of shrewdness and omnipotence. That could make the Japanese less likely to even go through the motions of listening to Jewish concerns. And if American Jews realize they have been hoodwinked and force a confrontation with the Japanese, ex-Minister Nakayama and author Uno could claim to be vindicated, that the clever Jews do, in fact, control America and the world, and that Japan had better watch out.

WILLY MAY STERN

Willy May Stern is the Far East correspondent for *Maariv*, a daily newspaper in Tel Aviv.

We're all Keynesians now.

GORBANOMICS

BY RICHARD PARKER

BOTH MIKHAIL GORBACHEV and Ronald Reagan entered office amid economic stagnation. Both blamed the trouble on an unpopular predecessor. Both vowed to resuscitate the economy through radical reform. In both cases, the first few years in office brought seemingly bad economic news and a growing erosion of confidence. For Reagan, what turned the tide was what the *Economist* subsequently described as "turbo-charged Keynesianism"—a combination of tax cuts and massive spending that (whatever the official rationale) amounted to a conventional Keynesian deficit-driven growth strategy. It is now beginning to look as if President Gorbachev may be stealing a page from President Reagan's book. Late last year the Soviet government admitted that it has been running deficits since the early 1980s, and that the deficit has mushroomed under Gorbachev.

Most Western reporters and analysts have interpreted this news as yet another sign that *perestroika* is stalled. That is in some respects a correct reading, and certainly a natural one; after all, President Reagan spent eight years lamenting the deficit even as he expanded it, thereby conditioning American audiences to its dangers. And, even for Keynesians, running up huge deficits is no solution, in the long run, to economic problems. But when an economy is undergoing a fundamental restructuring that may not yield fruit for years, there is no better way to buy crucial time than with deficit financing.

That's why recent reports from Moscow on 1988 economic performance are so intriguing. Despite widely reported problems with the grain harvest and widespread

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consumer unhappiness, there are signs—faint signs, but signs nonetheless—that deficit spending is beginning to work for Gorbachev. According to the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia*, national income, which grew at an average rate of around 3.6 percent during the pre-*perestroika* years of 1981-85, grew by 4.4 percent last year. Production of consumer goods (excluding alcohol) rose in 1988 by 5.5 percent, compared with an average of 3.7 percent during the pre-*perestroika* years. (These numbers are not adjusted for inflation—a difficult adjustment to make for Soviet numbers—but according to the inflation estimates of most analysts, even in real terms the 1988 numbers represent appreciable growth over the early 1980s.) In some areas of particular interest to consumers, the news in *Izvestia* was more dramatic. The production of color TVs was up by 22 percent in 1988, and housing was up by 15 percent. Productivity, which rose at an average nominal rate of 3.1 percent during the pre-Gorbachev years of the 1980s, rose 5.1 percent in 1988. If this tentatively good news seems at odds with reports in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, one reason may be that Western journalists almost invariably compare Soviet economic numbers with the ritually optimistic five-year and one-year government plans, rather than with historical baselines.

The Soviet government's deficit spending is part of a larger pattern that signals a sea change in Soviet economic theory, a change still not widely perceived in the West. In the earlier stages of *perestroika*, the emphasis among theorists was on decentralizing authority (cutting back the ministries) and on—for lack of a better word—entrepreneurship (legalizing international joint ventures and private "co-ops," etc.). Now the government is trying to make debt and credit crucial engines of economic growth. The Soviets seem poised to take a large step toward, as one Western diplomat has put it, remaking Marx as "a Slavic Keynes." And it isn't just government debt that the Soviets are warming up to, but growing use of debt and credit in the nascent entrepreneurial sector.

GORBACHEV'S DEBT strategy is full of risks. The Soviets are keenly aware that in Eastern Europe and China, inflation ensued after similar steps. Moreover, beyond a certain level, debt is a burden on future growth, not a catalyst for it. And already, the Soviet budget deficit appears to be considerably larger as a percentage of the GNP than that of the United States. By most Western estimates, in 1989 it will exceed seven percent, and maybe even ten percent, of the GNP. Still, the Soviet Union has something going for it that the United States doesn't: a very conservative historical use of debt, both public and private. As a result, the Soviets enjoy an excellent international credit rating and have very high levels of domestic savings that are largely untapped.

Internationally, the Soviet Union's net hard-currency debt is an extremely modest $21 billion. When the Soviets issued bonds earlier this year (through Swiss intermediaries), this post-czarist first caused a stir in Western financial markets, even though the amount—$60 million—equaled less than a few minutes' activity in the West's credit markets. Domestically, when the Soviet government has borrowed, it has done so in modest amounts (a few billion dollars per year) with something akin to Series E savings bonds—over long terms and at low interest rates.

Moreover, consumer debt in the Soviet Union is essentially nonexistent. The demand for cars so outstrips supply that cash up front is standard. And housing, 90 percent publicly owned and heavily subsidized, has, to date, required virtually no mortgage system. As for credit cards: one Moscow economist explained during my recent visit to the U.S.S.R. that "most Soviet consumers don't even have checking accounts." Business debt functions a bit more like debt in the West—in the limited sense that enterprises borrow and repay funds, in this case from the central banking authorities (principally Gosbank, the monolith that controls almost all Soviet banking). But often the "loan" turns out to be more like a government grant, with repayment waived. The use of debt to allocate resources among competing investments remains a largely alien concept in the Soviet Union.

BUT THIS may now be changing fast. While in the Soviet Union, I heard Pavel Bunich, of the National Academy of the Economy (roughly their equivalent to Harvard Business School), outline how Soviet trade unions and industrial enterprises are creating nascent mortgage markets so that employees can buy their own apartments and homes. Another economist noted a series of new co-op banks, financed in part through private investment, that will create a lending market apart from the cumbersome Gosbank. These innovations are small in themselves, but they go much further than the Soviets' last major "economic renewal" campaign, the Kosygin reforms of the 1960s, which in many ways presaged *perestroika*.

In a major budget address before the Presidium this fall, the Soviet finance minister underscored the changes that are afoot when he announced that the government would pour an unprecedented amount of new credit into the economy. He assured a presumably anxious audience that such credit practices were "a widespread financial practice" in the West and added pointedly that he expected the banks and industrial enterprises to use their massive retained earnings to follow the government's example.

Given the size of the government's budget deficit—officially acknowledged at 37 billion rubles (or $56 billion), but thought by some Western skeptics to be three times higher—the question is, where funds are coming from, and how the Soviets can keep financing it. Over the last few years, the United States has relied heavily on foreign lenders (the Japanese especially) to finance its own debt. With a nonconvertible ruble, that avenue is difficult for Moscow to follow (though there are signs that the Soviets are heading toward convertibility). Domestically, there are two sources of money: borrowing from private savings or printing more rubles.

The first option holds considerable promise. From the government's point of view, the great benefit of paying ever-higher wages, while providing little to spend them

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on, is that the Soviet public has amassed a fortune in savings—more than $450 billion in banks alone, with more, according to one Soviet economist, "hidden in pickle jars." As senior Soviet officials admit in private, the state has long taken an easygoing attitude toward such funds and thus failed to steer them toward their most productive uses. Gosbank, according to Leonid Abalkin, director of the Soviet Institute of Economics, regularly lends its depositors' funds to government agencies at zero interest, then recoups any funds needed to cover the meager depositor interest by placing a surcharge on loans to private enterprises.

The second alternative—to print rubles—seems to be increasingly the option of choice (and an option that, if relied on heavily, would clearly distinguish Gorbachev's approach from Reaganomics). Although the Soviets still publish no money-supply figures, Western analysts such as Jan Vanous of PlanEcon estimate that this past year Russian printing presses pumped billions into the economy. The main drawback of monetizing the deficit is, as in the West, the threat of inflation. So far in the Soviet Union, where many prices are still controlled, what little inflation there is has been largely hidden; consumers may pay the same price for a suddenly shoddier good, or pay more for a supposedly new model that in fact has only a new coat of paint. But, with price reform well under way at the wholesale level (according to one Soviet economist, one-third of the prices in the critical machine-building sector have now been decontrolled), an endlessly growing supply of paper rubles could—as more cautious Soviet economists have warned—unleash a Polish-style, or even worse, Yugoslav-style inflation.

THE REMARKABLE thing about Gorbachev is that, faced with these and other dangers that lie ahead, he has upped the ante of reform. First, late last fall, the Soviets announced a major new wave of Western loans and credits—nearly $12 billion in less than 60 days, more than the West had lent in the previous three years. They also announced new and still unfunded projects, including a $7 billion plan to double auto production and an agreement with Europe's largest agribusiness to develop and manage 1.5 million acres of Soviet farmland.

Second, to complement their Western borrowing, the Soviets have turned their attention East. They are hoping to win credits, aid, and large-scale investment from the Japanese and Koreans. Just before the Christmas holidays, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze arrived in Tokyo to open trade negotiations. Simultaneously, the Soviets approached the South Koreans, with whom they have no diplomatic relations, for $300 million in loans, an opening wedge. They then declared the Soviet Far East to be their first "special economic zone," allowing foreign investors tax-free profits on investment and abolishing the 49 percent ceiling on foreign ownership in joint ventures. Meanwhile, the Soviets and Chinese have plans for a summit this May, the first in 30 years. Soviet officials plan to follow that meeting with large-scale trade negotiations, designed to match an abundance of Siberian oil and gas with Chinese foodstuffs and consumer goods.

In December, as Western media filled with reports of the disaster in Armenia, and Western governments debated how to respond to Gorbachev's U.N. speech, the Soviets announced limited plans to devalue the ruble by at least 50 percent and allow all Soviet enterprises—public and private—to begin trading directly with the outside world. The devaluation will apply initially only to certain limited realms, but the important thing is the precedent: the government will make foreign currency available by auction to the 50,000 government enterprises and the thousands of new private co-ops. And, by allowing them free access to foreign markets, the reforms will send an inviting message to potential foreign partners.

OF COURSE, ultimately, Gorbachev has to deliver; he has to show that he can use debt not only to provide consumer goods for the Soviet people, but also to make capital investments that pay off—which means that ultimately *perestroika* has to succeed in liberating the economy from centralized government control. But Gorbachev clearly is in a position to buy time, at least a few more years and maybe more. With an immodestly low debt level by Western standards, and a first-class credit rating (backed by more than $80 billion in gold reserves), the Soviets could quite easily double or triple current foreign debt. Vanous of PlanEcon thinks they could service $100 billion in foreign debt "without much difficulty" by the mid-'90s, and says Western bankers would be willing to lend even more. (To say nothing of the billions in domestic savings that have not yet been put to efficient use.)

And if the Soviets continue down their (admittedly erratic) path toward ruble convertibility, foreign lending limits could rise greatly. Their principal exports—oil and arms—already trade in hard Western currency. But with convertibility, a wide array of machine goods (mainly for the Third World), raw materials (such as timber and pulp), and consumer products (such as low-priced furniture for the European market) could become overwhelmingly attractive to foreign buyers and thus to joint-venture investors.

What the Soviet Union, and the world, will look like ten years from now is anyone's guess. It is probably safe to say that, if the Soviets continue to link themselves to the outside world via debt, and to increase their reliance on domestic debt as well, while pursuing the overarching goal of economic decentralization, the significance of the "Iron Curtain" as the world's great dividing line will continue to decline. During a lengthy conversation with Oleg Bogomolov, a senior Gorbachev adviser, I asked what model he saw for a "reformed" Soviet Union 20 years hence. "Sweden," he replied immediately. "Sweden—or maybe Austria." The idea that the world's biggest Communist economy would soon transform itself into a social democratic one struck me as, at the least, a bold dream. Like the Reagan dreams of recent years, its realization will depend largely on understanding the promise and perils of debt. □

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What Do You Think?

1. Do you think the federal government pays enough attention to child care and other family concerns? 6 ☐ Yes -1 ☐ No -2

2. Do you think family issues should be a top priority for the President and Congress? 7 ☐ Yes -1 ☐ No -2

3. Are your child care concerns with: (check the three most important) 8
☐ Finding care -1
☐ Cost -2
☐ Reliability -3
☐ Safety -4
☐ Making emergency arrangements -5
☐ Quality of care -6

4. Check the statement(s) you agree with: 9
☐ It is the sole responsibility of parents to choose, find and pay for child care. -1
☐ While the choice of child care should be left to parents, government should help make good, affordable child care available for all children who need it. -2
☐ While the choice of child care should be left to parents, business should help make good, affordable child care available for all children who need it. -3

5. Please circle how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements—or if you have no opinion, check the box

	Strongly Agree			Strongly Disagree	No Opinion
The federal government should develop policies to make child care more available and affordable. 10	1	2	3	4	☐
State governments should develop policies to make child care more available and affordable. 11	1	2	3	4	☐
Employers should develop policies to make child care more available and affordable. 12	1	2	3	4	☐
The federal government should set minimum standards for child care centers including health and safety standards and staff-to-child ratios. 13	1	2	3	4	☐
The federal government should expand tax breaks to help parents pay for child care. 14	1	2	3	4	☐
The federal government should provide money to help parents pay for child care. 15	1	2	3	4	☐

6. Should every mother and father have the right to take a leave from work without fear of losing his/her job to take care of a newborn or newly-adopted child, or a seriously ill child or parent? 16
☐ Yes -1 → Answer Q.7
☐ No -2
☐ No Opinion -3 → Skip to Q.8

7. If "Yes," should this leave be: 17 ☐ Fully paid -1 ☐ Unpaid -3 ☐ Partially paid -2 ☐ Don't know -4

8. Poor single parents with young children should have: 18
☐ Child care, to take advantage of a work opportunity or job training program -1
☐ Financial support, to stay home with pre-school children -2
☐ Only those benefits that other parents get -3

9. Number of children under 18 living in your home: 19
☐ None -1 → Skip to Q.13
☐ One -2
☐ Two -3
☐ Three -4
☐ Four or more -5
→ Answer Q. 10

10. In what age categories? (Check all that apply) 20
☐ Under 2 -1 ☐ 2 - 5 -2 ☐ 6 - 9 -3 ☐ 10 or older -4

11. How many require child care services? 21
☐ None -1 → Skip to Q.13
☐ One -2
☐ Two -3
☐ Three -4
☐ Four or more -5
→ Answer Q.12a

12a. What do you pay for child care per week? 22
☐ Nothing -1 ☐ Under $50 -2 ☐ $51 to $100 -3 ☐ $101 to $200 -4 ☐ Over $200 -5

12b. If you pay for child care, does your family use the current dependent care tax credit (DCTC) when filing your income taxes? 23 ☐ Yes -1 ☐ No -2

Who Are You?

13. Age 24 ☐ Under 25 -1 ☐ 25 to 29 -2 ☐ 30 to 35 -3 ☐ 36 to 45 -4 ☐ 46 to 59 -5 ☐ 60 and over -6

14. Sex 25 ☐ Male -1 ☐ Female -2

15. Marital Status 26 ☐ Married -1 ☐ Widowed -2 ☐ Separated -3 ☐ Living with partner -4 ☐ Divorced -5 ☐ Single -6

16. Do you work for an income? (If "Yes," how many hours?) 27
☐ Yes, under 15 hours a week -1
☐ Yes, 15 to 34 hours a week -2
☐ Yes, 35 or more hours a week -3
☐ No, do not work for an income -4

17. Is your household income: (before taxes) 28
☐ Less than $20,000 -1
☐ $20,000 to $34,999 -2
☐ $35,000 to $49,999 -3
☐ $50,000 to $74,999 -4
☐ $75,000 and over -5

18. If married, does your spouse work for an income? 29 ☐ Yes -1 ☐ No -2

19. What is your ZIP code? (30-34) .....

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

The Way It Was

The Hollywood studio system, which began around 1920 and flourished from around 1930 through the 1950s, is unique in Western culture. It has descendants of a sort but no proximate forebears. Basically the studio system can be seen as an exponent of the familiar Marx-Engels dictum on the relation of a society's art to its modes of production:

The Genius of the System
by Thomas Schatz
(Pantheon Books, 514 pp., $24.95)

> Raphael as much as any artist was determined by . . . the organization of society and division of labor in his locality and, finally, by the division of labor in all the countries with which his locality had intercourse. . . . In Paris, the great demand for vaudevilles and novels brought about the organization of work for their production.

But neither 16th-century Rome nor 19th-century Paris had burst with a demand for their arts equivalent to America's demand for films—followed by the world's demand for American films—in the first half of this century. The difference in degree ordained an absolute difference in kind. No cultural phenomenon on record ranks in size and effect with Hollywood.

Much has been made of the truth that, in an era of accelerating technology, film was the first art—and is still the best art—to employ technology for humanistic ends. What is equally true is that the technology that made the art possible also made it globally available. Thus the very nature of the art itself produced the means to satisfy the global appetite for it.

Naturally Hollywood has been a mother lode for historians and biographers. Studies of individuals, of individual studios, cluster on the shelves. There are even studies of studio founders as a group: *The Moguls* by Norman Zierold (1969) and *The Movie Moguls* by Philip French (1969), both of which deal with the fact that most of the moguls were Jewish immigrants, and the latest and fullest in this subgenre, *An Empire of Their Own* by Neal Gabler (1988), which concentrates on that fact. Lately, overviews of the whole 30-year explosion have increased. The two best up to now were *The Hollywood Studio System* by Douglas Gomery (1986), which focuses on the financial histories of the studios, and a collection of essays by David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson called *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* (1985), a huge, thoughtful examination of the film styles and modes of production brought about by studio conditions. (One of the guidelines of this invaluable work is the Marx-Engels quotation cited above.) Now, as if to complete a triad, comes Thomas Schatz's *The Genius of the System*.

Schatz, who teaches at the University of Texas at Austin, chronicles the founding, growth, maintenance, and decline of four of the studios—and views the whole history as an adventure. Drawing largely on primary sources and using photographs liberally, he includes a good deal about financial records (à la Gomery) and a good deal about modes of production (à la Bordwell-Staiger-Thompson), but his emphasis is on the personal drama of the men involved—their vision, drive, capacity for work, greed, loyalties and betrayals, perception, blindness, and zest. Zest, as a factor of ambition, of fascination with the medium, is the dominant element in this long book.

The Genius of the System takes its title from an essay by André Bazin (1957) in which he bade the French auteurist critics infatuated with American cinema to "admire in it what is most admirable, i.e., not only the talent of this or that filmmaker but the genius of the system." (Schatz is so taken with this quotation that he featured it in his earlier book, *Hollywood Genres*.) That system consisted of eight major studios, two of which were only "major minors"—Universal and Columbia—because they owned no theaters back in the days before antitrust rulings outlawed that "integration" between production and exhibition. Schatz deals with two of the "major majors," MGM and Warner Bros., one of the lesser group, Universal, and the most prominent of the independent producers, David O. Selznick. Schatz limited his book to those four companies because "looking at all of them in a single volume would be impossible" in detail and because eight such full histories could not be braided into "a unified narrative." In his bibliographical note he adds what may be a key factor: he chose his four companies because of the availability of primary research sources, "corporate records in archives around the country."

Schatz justifies this choice-by-research-possibilities. With each studio he gives us the view from the inside, derived from company records, ledgers, memos, letters, telegrams, personal memoirs, minutes of conferences. (And, as acknowledged, he also uses published material.) He interweaves the four accounts, trying to keep them abreast chronologically. Occasionally the four stories overlap: e.g., Irving Thalberg began at Universal, then moved to MGM; Selznick was a force at MGM before he founded his own company. Each of the majors produced one film a week in its

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Lawrence of Arabia. Hurry. Only limited engagements for the restored and re-recorded reissue of David Lean's overwhelming epic. A wonderful cast, headed by Peter O'Toole (at 28). A wonderful experience. (Reviewed 2/20/89)

Pelle the Conqueror. Like a fine old-fashioned novel (which it was). A boy's growth on a Danish farm, c. 1890. Everything is well done, especially Max von Sydow's performance of Pelle's father. (1/23/89)

36 Fillette. A voluptuous 14-year-old girl (the title is a French dress size) encounters an older man. Written and directed by Catherine Breillat, whose concern is perception, not exploitation. (2/6/89)

True Believer. That neatly turned, small entertainment we all long for once in a while. A murder mystery and a legal tangle, involving a New York civil rights lawyer. (2/13/89)

SK

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heyday, and the impressionistic overview of the period is of an eight-part giant well pumping away steadily for decades to slake a worldwide thirst.

Some of the earliest American film directors, Maurice Tourneur and Erich von Stroheim for instance, began as individualists who controlled everything about their films; but as the studios waxed in process and strength, the individualists either had to conform or be smashed. Nowadays, it seems the only possibility, but it must have seemed daring then to put the manufacture of film on the same assembly-line basis that was developing in so many other fields. (Could the rise of Henry Ford have been far from pioneer Hollywood minds?) The studios firmly called film "product," and they organized departments to supply all components: writing, scene and costume design and construction, photography, casting, filmmaking itself, editing, marketing, and more. The superreality and the anti-reality—everything but reality—that were fed through film into the wide world's fantasies were as carefully engineered as the new automobiles that were altering physical lives.

Obviously more than business skill was involved. Talent was needed, even if it was only a talent for hiring talent. In some instances—Thalberg is always and rightly named as the chief example—an executive had extraordinary gifts for divining what the public wanted and for fashioning it out of inchoate material. That is the recurrent argument of Schatz's book: initially and finally, a film was made by the men in charge of the picture and of the studio. (Schatz notes only one important woman on the production side—Kay Brown, Selznick's canny story editor.)

This producer-power is a point often ignored. The producers in their serried ranks—from the Jack L. Warners at the very top down through the unit producers and executive producers or whatever their banana-republic titles were and all the way up again—were the real determiners of a film's existence. The directors did what they could, and some of them distinguished themselves; but almost none of them had the authority to start or finish a film. (Schatz tells us how such eminences as Huston and Hitchcock walked away from pictures after shooting them and left the editing in executives' hands.) Writers worked in squads that were dispatched to a film script at various stages of production the way a military commander sends squads

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until he captures a position. (Former journalists, says Schatz, were of more use to the studio than novelists and playwrights because journalists were more utilitarian, more willing to treat the business as a business.) No matter what the visible talents, everything that was on the screen was there, just the way it was there, because of men who were not on the screen.

YET THE studios developed "personal" characteristics because the chiefs saw the strengths and weaknesses in their own parishes. For a while, MGM specialized in lush "women's" pictures, Warner in nitty-gritty street films, Selznick in adaptations of famous novels; Universal became a not-so-little shop of horrors. These emphases were never exclusive within a studio nor were they permanent. (When the horror box office faded, Universal was revived by Deanna Durbin.) But studios thrived on knowing their markets and on having the right people on the payroll to satisfy them. Long-term contracts made the studio system possible, made genre specialization logical and easier. The non-genre picture, of which there were many, was more troublesome.

Schatz is especially vivid in his accounts of the making of some well-known films—*Grand Hotel*, *Frankenstein*, *Jezebel*, *Notorious* are only a few of them. Mining the daily records, Schatz shows us experienced yet harried men as they experimented with one approach and another, altered, expanded, discarded, argued, revised up to and after the previews. We see stupidities, vulgarities, silliness, but more often than not—or the studios would have foundered long before they did—we see keen industrial skill at work, sometimes a touch more than that. We can understand from these notes, to put the matter at its earthiest, why Thalberg rose from an annual salary of $1,250 at Universal in 1918 to $400,000 at MGM in 1926.

We get glimpses of projects that were sweated over, sometimes for years, then dropped. We see familiar pictures go through metamorphoses from the unfamiliar to the shapes we know. We read of castings that never came off: Buster Keaton as the ailing downtrodden Kringelein in *Grand Hotel* (L. B. Mayer vetoed Keaton because of his drinking), Ronald Reagan as Rick in *Casablanca* (as soon as Hal Wallis became the picture's producer, he changed the casting). Perhaps, somewhere in the Borges land of unwritten books, those unmade films exist and are now playing.

What happened to those great humming machines of film manufacture? Why did they slow down and crumble? The first, obvious cause was the rise of television, which lavished entertainment on the public at home and charged no price except the rupture—with commercials—of the viewer's sense of pictorial continuity. Another reason, as Schatz makes clear, was the ultimate success of the federal antitrust actions against the studios, which began in 1938 and climaxed in 1948. These judgments forced the separation of ownership of studios and theaters. That joint ownership had been manifestly unfair to independent theater owners, who got second choice of the studio offerings, often under oppressive terms; but the separation deprived the studios of the circulation of their blood, an assured flow from the heart to the extremities. Without that assured circulation, the studios suffered sluggishness and attrition—just as television arrived! Some studios still nominally exist, but mostly they are only financiers and distributors, loci for other people's films, which compete for exhibition instead of proceeding to it confidently as the last step in a great chain of being.

Schatz tells his interwoven stories in serviceable prose, though he sometimes feels compelled to be chummily casual. ("A go project"; Englishmen are Brits; Cagney's first name is always Jimmy.) He commits some egregious slights and errors. He calls auteurism "adolescent romanticism," which seems harsh even to an anti-auteurist. He describes Mae West as a "vaudevillian" before she came to pictures, which is inadequate. He places the Capitol Theater in New York on Times Square, which is six blocks off. And horrendously, he describes Thomas Eakins, whose work was a source of visual ideas for *Meet Me in St. Louis*, as "a popular magazine illustrator at the turn of the century, something of a predecessor to Norman Rockwell." But Schatz keeps the energy level of the book high, a prime requisite for his complex story.

SHALL WE mourn the passing of the studios? It would be no more sensible than to mourn the invention of television. The real question that pursues the reader of Schatz's book and of *The Classical Hollywood Cinema* is: Why ought we to care one way or the other? Aside from sociological interest and the excitement of a gigantic enterprise, why ought those who love film be concerned about the styles and fate of factories whose methods almost completely contradict the methods by which most of the world's great films have been made?

The answer, for me, is *Libeled Lady*. One answer, anyway. Of the 500 or so films a year from all Hollywood sources during that Golden Age—and I saw many of them when they were released, some of them much more recently—I estimate that about two percent are worth the time of a cultivated viewer today. My example of that one-in-50 is not a musical with Astaire's heartstopping genius, not *Citizen Kane*, not one of John Ford's best, but a 1936 MGM programmer, a farce-comedy with a routine producer, Lawrence Weingarten, and a routine director, Jack Conway. (Schatz mentions the film, but it's not in his skimpy index.) Three writers are credited, Maurine Watkins, Howard Emmett Rogers, and George Oppenheimer, but doubtless others were involved. Presumably *Libeled Lady* was concocted as a means to employ four of the studio's stars, Jean Harlow, Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy, and William Powell. Presumably the picture was planned and worked on, right from start to end of the assembly line, as a device to help pay the studio overhead. Yet the result, right off that assembly line, is a light-fingered, clever delight.

MY ARGUMENT is a good deal more than the one about a million monkeys eventually typing out *Hamlet*. *Libeled Lady* is what Bazin's "genius of the system" means to me, not the recherché aesthetic values in run-of-the-mill pop culture but the fact that the mere assemblage of a lot of talents and a lot of ambitions is bound to produce something truly good occasionally. Besides, there is a proportional argument to be made for the studios. I know of no study that compares Hollywood's activities during the studio years with the activities of Broadway or the publication of novels during those years. Such a study would be subjective, not statistical. Still, except for a very few peaks in drama and fiction, how could any respectable study show the proportion of lastingly good plays or novels to be much higher than that of lastingly good films?

Money was always the goal in Hollywood, certainly, but something more than money-hunger flared in the first decades of American film. I once spent a

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few days turning the yellowed pages of the earliest film trade journals, around 1908, and although almost everything was business news—who had made what, who had bought what—heat seemed to burn up from those crumbling pages, passion about something new and momentous, bigger (as those people sensed) than any of them could foresee. That fire wasn't entirely lost in the industrialization during the next 40 years. It wasn't only the cash that obsessed the Movieland mind; money can be made in other ways. Film itself absorbed most of them, day and night—the thrill of filmmaking. That's why there is something touching in Schatz's history of an industry.

Charlie Parker, Clint Eastwood, and America.

BIRD LAND

BY STANLEY CROUCH

IN THE RED and purple bric-a-brac that often passes for jazz criticism or jazz scholarship, Charlie Parker looms large. He is the rebel angel speared by the marksmen of the marketplace, and by the grand conspiracy of robed and unidentified klansmen. Parker was truly one of the most mysterious figures in American art. Six years ago I began the bedeviling job of writing Parker's biography. It quickly became clear that much of what was taken for granted about the alto saxophonist was a mix of near-truth, fabrication, and butt-naked lies.

Over the last few years, culminating in Clint Eastwood's very bad film *Bird*, there has been more attention than usual shown to Parker. Almost everything he ever recorded is now available, some of it reworked for sound vastly superior to the original releases. There is a coffee table book, a video documentary, and a stack of glowing reviews of *Bird* that reveal the extent to which many who would be sympathetic to Negroes are prone to an unintentional, liberal racism. That racism reduces the complexities of the Afro-American world to a dark, rainy pit in which Negroes sweat, suffer, dance a little, mock each other, make music, and drop dead, releasing at last a burden of torment held at bay only by drugs.

It must be that melodramatic notion of suffering that makes Eastwood's film so appealing. Many film critics appear to have the same problem with the depiction of Negro life that many literary critics do. Too quick to prove that they really understand the plight of the caged coon, who would be a man if only the white world would let him, they often fall for condescending, ignorant, bestial images of Afro-Americans, feeling for them as visitors to Dr. Moreau's Island did, where the noble beasts of the jungle were mutilated into bad imitations of human beings in the mad surgeon's "house of pain." In *Bird*, Negro life is such an incredible house of pain that the dying Charlie Parker summons up, with one exception, only a montage of negative experience.

The exception is his friend Dizzy Gillespie, who proudly asks an audience just served up some sensational saxophone what they think about it. Otherwise Parker on his deathbed summons up a black doctor predicting that he will die from drugs, a black saxophonist laughing at him, a black musician throwing a cymbal at him in disgust during his early, ineffectual efforts at improvisation. All that remains for him, in Eastwood's account, are images of his smiling, vibrant, white lover Chan, and of his white trumpeter buddy Red Rodney. This is a Charlie Parker in no way connected to, in no way the product of, the Afro-American culture filled with the bittersweet intricacies that were given aesthetic substance so superbly in his music.

The movie makes a perfect companion to Chan Parker's *To Bird With Love*, a huge picture book now out of print that was done with the French archivist and producer Francis Paudras. Artfully organized and intimate (it includes bills, love notes, and poignant telegrams), one would never guess from the book that its author was the last of Parker's four wives, the first two black, the last two

Stanley Crouch's book of essays, *Ice Cold Blues and Foreign Intrigue*, is due this fall from Oxford University Press.

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white. A famous photograph of Parker with his first wife, Rebecca, whom he married when he was 15, their son Leon, and her subsequent husband Ross Davis is cropped so that Rebecca doesn't exist. Those are the kinds of croppings that abound in Eastwood's film, which reportedly leans heavily on Chan's unpublished memoir, *Life in E-Flat*. All of the things that Chan knew little about, or preferred to ignore, remain outside the film.

Though Parker was well taken care of as a child, for example, and was quite attached to his mother, whom he called every weekend, she is only referred to once in *Bird*, when the soothsaying doctor tells that boy he better watch out for that dope. Chan is given a monologue about her own childhood and her own father and asks Parker about his early life, but he tells her in reply only about the day he discovered that he was addicted. So much for the complexity, or the vitality, of *his* past. His second wife, Geraldine, didn't play a large role in his life, and was only married to him a year; but Doris, the third, went to California in 1946 when Parker had a nervous breakdown there, visited him in Camarillo as often as she could, and returned with him in 1947 to New York, where they lived together until 1950. (Though Eastwood's stacking of the deck in Chan's favor elicits a remarkable performance from Diane Venorna, there is something distasteful about the film's general slighting of black women, not least in light of Parker's friendships and working relationships with women such as Mary Lou Williams, Sarah Vaughan, and Ella Fitzgerald; only one on-screen speaking part is given to a black female, in a fictitious situation in which Bird recalls being told, when he was working his style out, "Nigger, don't be playing that shit behind me while I'm trying to *sang*.")

This film depicts not Negroes, but Negro props. No wonder, perhaps, in the light of Eastwood's comment to *Newsweek* that because he listened to a lot of rhythm and blues on the radio as a young man, "I think I was really a black guy in a white body." We get the young Parker playing a song flute as he rides on the back of a horse, a teenaged Parker with a saxophone on the porch of an unpainted house, a couple of young Negroes smoking cigarettes near him. Had Parker grown up in New Orleans instead of Kansas City, he would almost certainly have been shown on a cotton bale.

CHARLIE PARKER, 1946

Then the movie flashes forward to Parker in 1945, roaring through the chords of "Lester Leaps In." Forest Whitaker, who plays Parker, has been directed to hump and jerk and thrust his horn outward, exactly as Parker did not. "The thing about Bird," says Art Taylor, a drummer who played with him, "is that he didn't move. He just stood there almost still as a statue, and when he finished, there was a pool of water at his feet." (Whitaker obviously has the talent to get far closer to Bird than he did; but he was not asked to do much more than another version of the Negro manchild.)

Next Parker comes home, high, in 1954, and explains to Chan that he has just been fired from Birdland, the club named for him. As he gives the details, she talks to him as though he is a child who went off without his lock and got his bike stolen. Bird refers to himself as "an overgrown adolescent," angrily taunting her for trying to "work that psychology on him." He swallows iodine, falls to the floor, and Chan stands over him, saying, "That was stupid. Now I'll have to call an ambulance." From that point in the story until its bitter end, despite an outburst here and a joke there, this Charlie Parker is forever under somebody—his wife, his doctors, his agent, the white South, the narcotics police, the court system, the music business. He is always a victim: of the white folks, of the iron-hearted colored people, of himself. At best he is an idiot savant, in possession of natural rhythm, with little more than boyish charm and a sense of bewilderment. There is no sign of the sophistication, the curiosity, the aggressiveness, the regality, the guile, the charisma of which all who knew Parker still speak. Eastwood's Parker works only at getting high or not getting high.

Even the world of music is presented as something Bird isn't very involved in, other than as a way of making a living. He shows no real love for the saxophone or for jazz. There is no competitive feeling, no sense of threat, no arrogance, no appreciation of any of his predecessors. (As the pianist Walter Davis Jr. told me, "You can't have a movie about Bird and not have him run over *somebody*. This was a very aggressive man. He took over and made things go *his* way. If you weren't strong, Charlie Parker would mow you down like grass.") He's just a colored man with a saxophone, a white girlfriend, and a drug problem. When he dies, you are almost relieved.

The critics have made much of Eastwood's love of Parker's art, and even

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more of the technology that he and his music director Lennie Neihaus used to extract Parker's improvisations from their original recordings so that contemporary musicians could overdub them for today's sound. That accomplishment, however, was a catastrophic mistake. The splendid remasterings that Jack Towers and Phil Schapp have done with Parker's own work on Savoy and Verve are vastly superior to this gimmicky, updated sound track. On the CD versions of *Savoy Original Master Takes* and *Bird: The Complete Charlie Parker on Verve*, there are aesthetic details never heard before. Moreover, as Doris Parker said to Eastwood after a screening of *Bird* at the New York Film Festival, "Charlie didn't play by himself. When you take him away from his real musicians, you destroy what inspired him to play what he did." What the musicians play on Eastwood's sound track is often incompatible, in fact, with what Parker's alto is doing; the music is mixed so high that the saxophone almost never rises above the background, and the drummer, John Guerin, does *not* swing.

THE LIFE OF Charlie Parker was a perfect metaphor for the turmoil that exists in this democratic nation. It traversed an extremely varied world, including everything from meeting and talking with Einstein to attending parties with Lord Buckley where Communists tried to turn him. Parker was at once the aristocracy and the rabble, the self-made creator of a vital and breathtakingly structured jazz vernacular and an anarchic man of dooming appetites. He was always trying to stay in the good graces of those stunned by his disorder. His artistic power was almost forever at war with his gift for self-destruction. He was dead in 1955, at 34, his remarkable musical gifts laid low by his inability to stop fatally polluting and tampering with the flesh and blood source of his energy, with his own body.

Those musical gifts made it possible for Parker to evolve from an inept alto saxophonist, a laughingstock in his middle teens, to a virtuoso of all-encompassing talent who by the age of 25 exhibited an unprecedented command of his instrument. His prodigious facility was used not only for exhibition or revenge, moreover, but primarily for the expression of melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic inventions, at velocities that extended the intimidating relationship of thought and action that forms the mystery of im-

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provisation in jazz. In the process, Parker defined his generation: he provided the mortar for the bricks of fresh harmony that Thelonius Monk and Dizzy Gillespie were making, he supplied linear substance and an eighth note triplet approach to phrasing that was perfectly right for the looser style of drumming that Kenny Clarke had invented.

THE ANOMALIES are endless. He performed on concert stages as part of Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic, traveling in style and benefitting from Granz's demand that all his musicians receive the same accommodations, regardless of race; but when he was at the helm of his own groups, Parker was usually performing in the homemade chamber music rooms of nightclubs. "One night I'm at Carnegie Hall," he once told the saxophonist Big Nick Nicholas, "and the next night I'm somewhere in New Jersey at Sloppy Joe's." These shifts of venue paralleled the contrasts in his personality. The singer Earl Coleman, who first met Parker in Kansas City in the early '40s, said of him:

> You could look at Bird's life and see just how much his music was connected to the way he lived. . . . You just stood there with your mouth open and listened to him discuss books with somebody or philosophy or religion or science, things like that. Thorough. A little while later, you might see him over in a corner somewhere drinking wine out of a paper sack with some juicehead. Now that's what you hear when you listen to him play: he can reach the most intellectual and difficult levels of music, then he can turn around—now watch this—and play the most low down, funky blues you ever want to hear. That's a long road for somebody else, from that high intelligence all the way over to those blues, but for Charlie Parker it wasn't half a block; it was right next door. . . .

It was not Parker's scope, however, but his wild living, and his disdain for the rituals of the entertainment business, that made him something of a saint to those who felt at odds with America in the years after World War II, who sought a symbol of their own dissatisfaction with the wages of sentimentality and segregation. Parker was a hero for those who welcomed what they thought was a bold departure from the long minstrel tradition to which Negroes were shackled. He was, for them, at war with the complicated fact that the Negro was inside and outside at the same time, central to American sensibility and culture but subjected to separate laws and depicted on stage and screen, and in the advertising emblems of the society, as a creature more teeth and popped eyes than man, more high-pitched laugh and wobbling flesh than woman.

PARKER APPEARED at a point in American history when that bizarre image of the Negro had been part of many show business successes: minstrelsy itself, the first nationally popular stage entertainment; *Birth of a Nation*, the first epic film and "blockbuster"; "Amos 'n' Andy," the most popular radio program since its premiere in 1928; *The Jazz Singer*, where Jolson's Jacob Rabinowitz stepped from cantorial melancholy into American optimism by changing his name to Jack Robbins, changing the color of his face, and introducing the recorded voice to film; *Gone With the Wind*, Atlanta's plantation paradise lost; not to mention the endless bit parts in all the performing arts that gave comic relief of a usually insulting sort, or that "realistically" showed Negro women advising lovelorn white girls in their boudoirs. Parker offered an affront to that tradition of humiliation.

In fact, the jazzmen who preceded Parker had also addressed the insults of popular culture, and countered those stereotypes with the elegant deportment and the musical sophistication of the big bands. Parker turned his back on those bands, though; and not only because he preferred five-piece units. Manhandling the saxophone and Tin Pan Alley ditties, writing tunes that were swift and filled with serpentine phrases of brittle bravado, arriving late or not at all, occasionally in borrowed or stolen clothes so ill-fitting that the sleeves came midway down his forearms and the pants part way up his calves, speaking with authority on a wide variety of subjects in a booming mid-Atlantic accent, Parker nicely fit the bohemian ideal of an artist too dedicated to his art to be bought and too worldly to be condescended to. (Except, of course, when he chose himself to mock his own identity, as when he stood in front of Birdland dressed in overalls and announced to his fellow players that he was sure they must be jazz musicians because they were so well dressed.)

Historically, Parker was the third type of Afro-American artist to arrive in the idiom of jazz. Louis Armstrong had fused the earthy and the majestic, and had set the standards for improvisational virtuosity and swing; but he was also given to twisting on the jester's mask. Duke Ellington manipulated moods, melodies, harmonies, timbres, and rhythms with the grace of relaxed superiority, suavely expanding and refining the art in a manner that has no equal. Armstrong's combination of pathos, joy, and farce achieved the sort of eloquence that Chaplin sought; and Ellington commanded the implications of the Negro-derived pedal percussion that gave Astaire many of his greatest moments. But Parker was more the gangster hero, the charming anarchist that Cagney introduced in *Public Enemy*. The tommy gun velocity of Parker's imagination mowed down the clichés he inherited, and enlarged the language of jazz, but like Cagney's Tom Powers, he met an early death, felled by the dangers of fast living.

IN MANY WAYS, Parker reflected the world in which he was reared, the wild west town of Kansas City, where everything was wide open and the rules were set on their heads. The mayor and the police were in cahoots with the local mob; liquor flowed during Prohibition, and gambling and prostitution were virtually legal. When the musicians went to bed, everybody else was getting up to go to work. Parker's mother was the mistress of a deacon considered an upstanding representative of the life led by those who lived by the Bible. These were, perhaps, the origins of Parker's conviction that finally there was no law; and the double standards of the racial terrain understandably added to that view.

Parker's father was an alcoholic drawn to the night life; his mother left him when the future saxophonist was about nine. Convinced that she could keep young Charlie away from the things her husband loved by giving the boy everything he wanted, she reared him as a well-dressed prince who could do no wrong. That treatment is far from unusual in the lives of Negro innovators. It gives them the feeling that they can do things differently from everyone else. But there was also a crippling side to it. As the bassist Gene Ramey, who knew the saxophonist from about 1934, remarks in the excellent oral history *Goin' To Kansas City*, "He couldn't fit into society, 'cause evidently his mother babied him so much, that he . . . was expecting that from everybody else in the world."

But when Parker, who was known for his laziness, became interested in music in the '30s, he quickly discovered that the gladiatorial arena of the jam session

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made no allowances for handsome brats in tailor-made J. B. Simpson suits at the height of the Depression. He was thrown off many a stage. It was then that he decided to become the best. As Parker told fellow alto player Paul Desmond in 1953, "I put quite a bit of study into the horn, that's true. In fact, the neighbors threatened to ask my mother to move once when I was living out West. They said I was driving them crazy with the horn. I used to put in at least 11 to 15 hours a day. I did that for over a period of three or four years."

He practiced incessantly, and was in the streets, listening to the great local players. He was drawn especially to Buster Smith and Lester Young, though he told the younger saxophonist Junior Williams that it was when he heard Chu Berry jamming in Kansas City in 1936 that he actually became serious about the saxophone. (So serious, in fact, that he gave his first son Berry's name, Leon.) Berry was swift, articulate, and a great chord player; Smith had deep blues soul; Young preferred a light sound that disavowed the conventional vibrato and invented melodic phrases of spectacular variety and rhythmic daring. Parker was also taken by the trumpeter Roy Eldrige, whom he quotes in an early homemade recording, and studied the harmonic detail of Coleman Hawkins; and he was surely inspired by the unprecedented velocity of the pianist Art Tatum.

VELOCITY was essential to Parker's life. Everything happened fast. On the night that Joe Louis lost to Max Schmeling in 1936, 15-year-old Charlie Parker proposed to Rebecca Ruffin and married her a week later. He was a morphine addict by the summer of 1937, which suggests that he may have mixed in an upper-class circle, since there was no heavy drug trade in Kansas City at the time. By January 1938, Parker was a father. He was also anxious to see more of the world and "rode the rails" with hobos later that year, stopping in Chicago, then continuing on to New York, where he arrived with a nickel and a nail in his pocket. It was there that Parker found the beginnings of his own style. In 1940 he returned to Kansas City for his father's funeral and joined Jay McShann's big band, becoming the boss of the reed section and the principal soloist. In a few years he headed the movement that added new possibilities to jazz improvisation and was termed, much to Parker's chagrin, "bebop."

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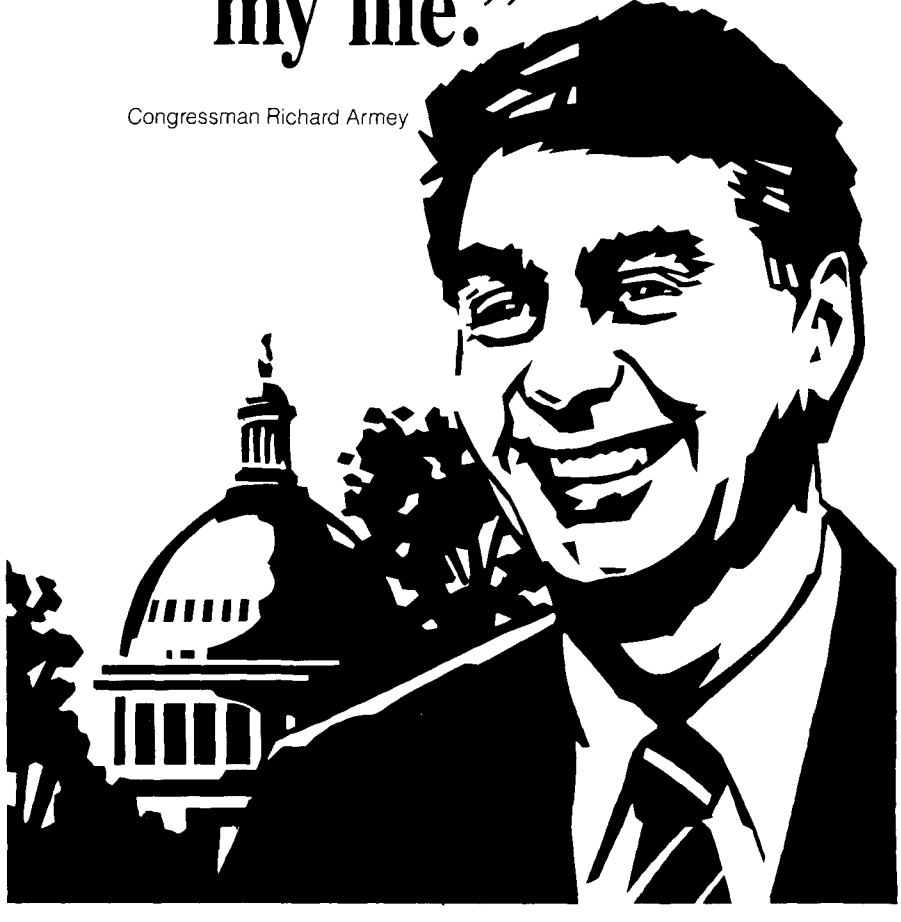

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It was during Parker's three years with McShann that the intellectually ambitious personality began to take shape. Parker was interested in politics, mechanics, history, mathematics, philosophy, religion, languages, and race relations. He loved to mimic actors like Charles Laughton, was a prankster and a comic. His problems with dissipation became obvious, too; he told his wife Doris that he had never been able to stop, and recalled that his mother would have to come and get him from a hotel where he was using Benzedrine, staying up nights and going over music. These appetites made him unreliable, and McShann had to send him home for rest often, working with his mother to try and help him handle his addiction.

Parker was also, in fine modernist fashion, a man of masks. Gene Ramey, a member of the McShann band, recalled:

> He shouldn't have been nicknamed Yardbird or Bird Parker; he should have been called Chameleon Parker. Man, could that guy change directions and presentations on you! But he also had a gift for fitting in—if he wanted to. That applied to his music most of all. Bird would sit in anywhere we went—Bob Wills, Lawrence Welk, wherever the local jam session was, anybody that was playing. . . . We used to practice together often, just saxophone and bass. We would take "Cherokee," and he would ask me to tell him when he repeated something so he could meet the challenge of staying fresh and fluent. Bird liked to take one tune and play it for a couple of hours. Then he would know every nook and cranny of the melody and the chords. He was very scientific about those things. . . . Now he might not talk about it, but don't let that fool you into believing he wasn't thinking about it.

But beneath the masks, beneath the obsession with music, the mimicry, and the involvement in the sweep of life, there was a need. McShann says that Parker had a crying soul that always came out in his playing; and his first wife, Rebecca, observed it when he was in his early teens:

> It seemed to me like he needed. . . . He wasn't loved, he was just given. Addie Parker wasn't that type of woman. She always let him have his way, but she didn't show what I call affection. It was strange. She was proud of him and everything. Worked herself for him and all, but, somehow I never saw her heart touch him. It was odd. It seemed like to me he needed. He just had this need. It really touched me to my soul.

The refinement of Parker's rhythm and the devil-may-care complexity of his phrases came to early distinction during those barnstorming years with McShann, in his next job with Earl Hines, and in the laboratory for the new vernacular that was Billy Eckstine's big band. On "Swingmatism" and "Hootie Blues," recorded with McShann in 1941, Parker had already put together the things that separated him from the alto order of the day. His sound is lighter; he uses almost no vibrato; the songful quality of his lines have a fresh harmonic pungence; and his rhythms, however unpredictable, link up with an inevitability that seems somehow to back its way forward through the beat.

When McShann brought his band to New York in early 1942, Parker was able to spend time after hours with the musicians who were stretching the language of jazz uptown in Harlem, usually in Minton's Playhouse or Monroe's Uptown House. "When Charlie Parker came to New York, he had just what we needed," said Dizzy Gillespie. "He had the line and he had the rhythm. The way he got from one note to the other and the way he played the rhythm fit what we were trying to do perfectly. We heard him and knew the music had to go *his* way."

THE IMPORTANCE of Parker's jamming with Gillespie, Monk, and the others has often been noted; but the importance of his big band experience cannot be overemphasized. In those bands Parker learned not only how to blend with other musicians and how to lead a section, he also became a master of setting riffs, those spontaneous motifs that were repeated as chants. Riffs were what gave Kansas City's jazz its reputation; they compressed the essence of the music into one vital unit of rhythm and tune. By playing for dancers, Parker discovered the world of rhythms that Afro-American audiences had invented. Backing singers as varied as McShann's blues crooner Walter Brown, the romantic balladeer Eckstine, and the unprecedented virtuoso Sarah Vaughan, Parker had three distinctly different approaches to the voice to draw from, all of which were incorporated into the epic intricacy of his melodic inventions. Jazz had always demanded that the player think and play his ideas with exceptional speed and logic, but Parker proved that everything could be done even faster. Unlike Tatum, Hawkins, and Byas, who were excellent technicians given to harmonically sophisticated arpeggios, Parker was primarily a melodist; his work brought lyricism to the chords and made rhythmic variations that matched the best of Armstrong and Young.

BY CASTING aside vibrato, Parker introduced a sound many considered harsh at the time. But the ballad performances on Warner Bros.' *The Very Best of Bird* (the famous Dial sessions of 1946-47) establish that the hardness of his sound was modified by a charming skill for elucidating the riches of romantic fancy in a way that made his music both spiritual and erotic; this was the romantic talent that drew many women to this disordered but beguiling man from whom a high-minded sense of grandeur was delivered with imperial determination. That imperial aspect was also a part of his music's attraction: awesome virtuosity of the sort heard in "Warmin' Up A Riff" or "Koko" is always a protest against limitations. (Both performances are available on Savoy Original Master Takes.)

The small, curved brass instrument with cane reed and pearl buttons was throttled and twisted, until it allowed him to express a barely stifled cry that was ever near the edge of consuming rage, the pain of consciousness elevated to extraordinary musical articulation. Bird often sounds like a man torn from the womb of safety too soon. He resented the exposure that music demands, and yet he loved it, because there was no other way he could project himself. But this was no primal scream: the fearful force of Parker's music is always counterpointed by a sense of combative joy and a surprising maturity, by the authority of the deeply gifted. Parker brought the violent rage of the primitive blues (of Robert Johnson, for example) to the citadels of art inhabited by the music's greatest improvisors. For Parker, swing and lyricism were some sort of morale, the bars behind which the beast of hysteria was confined.

Will, in sum, was important to the art of Charlie Parker. He was, after all, a heroin addict. Those who know little about intoxication often fail to realize that the repetition of the condition is what the addicted love most. They seek a consistency that will hold off the arbitrary world. If a few glasses of whiskey, or a marijuana cigarette, or an injection of heroin will guarantee a particular state, the addict has something to rely on. As Parker told Doris, "When you

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have a bad day, there's nothing you can do about it. You have to endure it. When I have a bad day, I know where to go and what to do to make a good day out of it." Doris Parker also notes that the saxophonist often showed the strength to kick the habit, cold turkey, by himself at home. But the temptations ever present in the night world of jazz always overwhelmed him.

Charlie Parker's early fall resulted more from his way of making "a good day" than it did from race, the economic system, or the topsy-turvy world of his art. It was a tragedy played out along a dangerously complex front of culture and politics, something far more intricate than the crude hipster mythology of Eastwood's *Bird*. It was a fully American story of remarkable triumphs, stubborn misconceptions, and squandered resources that tells us as much about the identity of this country as it does about the powers of jazz.

DEAD END KIDS

The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance by John Boswell

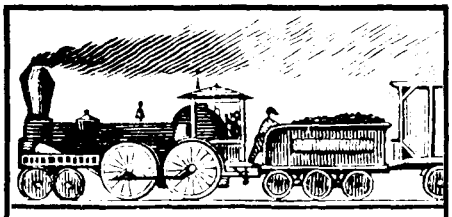
(Pantheon, 488 pp., $24.95)

In his *Confessions*, Rousseau not only disclosed that this apostle of kindness to children had dumped all five of his own infants in a foundling hospital, but also added defiantly: "I made no secret of my action because I saw nothing wrong in it." What John Boswell now makes clear beyond all reasonable doubt is that there was nothing new or unusual about either the act of abandonment or the attitude behind it, since the large-scale abandonment of children had a long history in the West going back at least 1,600 years.

Together with the equally widespread practice of often lethal wet-nursing by hired labor, and de facto infanticide by neglect, malnutrition, and disease, the scale and duration of these means of disposing of unwanted children puts into question our optimistic post-Romantic views about the innate love of parents for their children. Nobody doubts that nature has programmed the mother to be bonded to her child, since the perpetuation of the species depends upon it. But this built-in natural attachment of parents for children can be, often has been, overridden, for the poor by the stark necessities of avoiding starvation, for the rich by cultural factors associated with problems of property, inheritance, or religion.

Boswell's attention was drawn to the sheer scale of the abandonment of children in antiquity by the discovery that several prominent theologians of the Early Christian Church urged a father not to sleep with a prostitute (of either sex), not because it was itself an immoral and sinful action, but because he might unknowingly be committing incest with his own abandoned child. The mind reels at the implications of so astonishing an argument. It opens up the possibility, or even the probability, that it was a common practice for Christian fathers to abandon their children, or to sell them directly into prostitution.

As Boswell is very well aware, his evidence is far from what it should be. He has had to put together his history of the abandonment of children in the West from the third to the 18th centuries from some scrappy demographic data, legal treatises, sermons and homilies by clerical moralists, literary texts, and some hard data for admissions to, and mortality in, 18th-century foundling hospitals. By itself, none of this evidence is either very clear or very reliable, especially since there is always a wide gap between moral and religious prescriptions and actual behavior. But much can be learned from incidental remarks in prescriptive texts; and taken together Boswell's data add up to a coherent picture of morals and manners. He has few statistics to prove his case, but the general convergence of the different types of evidence is persuasive. I believe that we can trust what he has to say as being a reasonably close approximation to the truth, despite the fact that there is a huge gap in the high Middle Ages,



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when the evidence is very thin indeed.

Boswell's title, *The Kindness of Strangers*, is an ironic cover for a very grisly reality. In late antiquity very large numbers of surplus infants—how large it is impossible to tell—were disposed of in a variety of ways. Some were deliberately exposed in remote places, and left to be torn to pieces by carnivorous animals and birds of prey. Others, who were abandoned in public places, met a variety of fates at the hands of strangers. Many were enslaved in foreign parts, like the English boys who turned up in the slave market at Rome, whose beauty prompted Pope Gregory to quip that they looked more like angels than Angles, and led him to send an expedition to Christianize these handsome pagans.

Many others, both boys and girls, were used as sex objects by their owners, or were sold into prostitution. Some boys were castrated to turn them into eunuchs, who could be sold for a profit. Other little boys and girls were hideously mutilated so that they could arouse pity and earn money as beggars. The lucky ones were those taken in by childless couples, who adopted them, cared for them, and bequeathed them their property. But the great majority probably soon died of neglect. After all, up to a third of all babies died anyway during the Middle Ages and the early modern period.

THE EARLY Christian moral theologians were ambiguous or tolerant of this practice of child abandonment. They regarded it as inevitable in a world of shrinking economic resources and growing poverty; they accepted this aspect of life in late antiquity as they found it. Boswell suggests that they may also have contributed to the problem by insisting that the only legitimate use of sex was for procreation, that the use of it merely for pleasure was a sin. He argues that this focus on the purely procreative aspects of sex probably increased the number of unwanted children, and thus increased the scale of abandonment.

But this is highly unlikely, since another aspect of Christian doctrine was an extreme suspicion of sexuality in general. From the third to the tenth century, the Church authorities issued edicts forbidding sex for religious reasons on Saturdays, Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays—and for the 40-day fast periods before Easter, Christmas, and Witsuntide. Some writers added major feast days of the Church and the days of the Apostles to the proscription. To these were added the days of female impurity (menstruation, pregnancy, a month after delivery, even while breast-feeding). If all these injunctions had been obeyed, the number of days a year on which marital sex was permitted would have been reduced to between 21 and 44. This was hardly a doctrine likely to increase the number of unwanted children. One can reasonably conclude, however, that both of these injunctions—about lengthy abstention and the use of sex exclusively for procreation—were honored mostly in the breach.

IT IS clear that the abjectly poor were not the only ones who were abandoning or selling their children in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. For cultural and economic reasons, the rich were doing it, too. Demographers have long been suspicious about the very high sex ratios of boys to girls recorded in upper-class Roman families, ratios that have led them to suspect that girls were somehow being quietly disposed of. They were also very surprised to find that the average well-to-do Roman family had only two to three children, instead of the six to eight one might expect in a non-contraceptive society. A study of religious texts shows that the rich were in the habit of disposing of younger sons by abandonment or by the sale of them to infertile couples for adoption; their purpose was to reduce the number of claimants on the family property to a single heir. As for daughters, they too were abandoned, or sold into prostitution, so as to avoid the cost of marrying them off. The upper-class late Roman family was not bonded by emotional ties. It was above all an institution for the creation, the preservation, and the transmission of property. Any children who seemed to threaten this objective were ruthlessly discarded. (This does not mean, of course, that parents did not feel affection for the children they chose to keep.)

By the tenth century, the increasingly wealthy Christian Church had developed an attractive solution to abandonment for noble and other rich people with surplus children. The parents could earn religious credit by dedicating these children to God, and handing them over to become monks or nuns. The children who were deposited in religious houses in the Middle Ages were certainly clothed and fed for life. In other respects, however, their fate was similar to that of slaves, since they were prematurely subjected to lifelong vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience.

This was a fate to which most of them seem to have submitted without protest. Still, some rebelled, on occasion with fearful consequences. Boswell tells, in an appendix, the story of a young girl in the 12th century who was given to God at an early age and placed in a nunnery at York. When she grew to maturity she found herself unfit for her vocation as a nun, troubled especially by the vow of chastity. She fell in love with a young man, secretly slept with him, and became pregnant. When her condition was discovered, the enraged nuns stripped her, chained her down, and flogged her almost to death. They then forced the girl to entice the young man into a trap, held him down, and obliged the girl to cut off her lover's genitals, which they then stuffed into her mouth. All this was done in a paroxysm of zeal inspired by religious piety and sexual frustration.

A TRICKLE of evidence of abandonment connects the 12th century to the Renaissance, when the first official foundling hospitals were established, in Florence and elsewhere. The 18th century was an age of rapidly rising population, and as a result there is a flood of evidence for the abandonment of children on a very large scale indeed, much larger than had occurred at least since the Black Death in the 14th century. We have ample evidence that the abandonment of infants was a common phenomenon all over Western Europe at this time. The known—and therefore, the minimum—number of children abandoned in Toulouse was one in four. In Lyons and Paris it was more like one in three, and the lowest urban rates seem to have been one in ten. What these astonishing figures clearly prove is that highly civilized Western societies (ancient Rome and Italy, 18th-century France or England) practiced child abandonment on a very large scale without any noticeable moral qualms. It was a socially acceptable form of "post-natal family planning."

The masses of abandoned babies were now admitted anonymously to the new institutions of foundling hospitals. They were placed on revolving turntables that prevented the recipient from seeing the donor. Once admitted, they were cared for impersonally by paid agents. Alas for good intentions! Gross overcrowding, poor sanitation, inadequate or careless breast-feeding, and terrible administration soon turned most of these hospitals

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into death camps, with mortality rates of up to 90 percent. One can only suspect that this was what 18th-century society secretly wanted: the speedy disposal of these unwanted children, out of sight and out of mind.

THE RESULTS notwithstanding, it is historically significant that the founders of the hospitals meant well. Boswell accepts that most 18th-century foundling hospitals served as death camps, but the fact remains that their establishment in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries was a symptom of a more orderly, hygienic, and morally acceptable way of disposing of abandoned children. By the 18th century, the West no longer put its trust in the kindness of strangers. And rightly so. There is thus no reason to accept Foucault's dark vision of hospitals as places of deliberate incarceration and destruction. For the first time in Western history, thanks to the spread of Enlightenment ideas, some strangers and the state were at least trying to be kind, even if the results were usually a disaster.

The London Foundling Hospital, for example, owed its origin in the mid-18th century to Captain Thomas Coram, a philanthropist. As he took his daily walks through the East End of the city, he was so appalled by the sight of dying or dead infants abandoned on dungheaps that he spent much energy and money building a hospital to save them. It worked quite well for a while at rescuing the abandoned babies of London, until Parliament in its wisdom ordered that it be open to children from all over the country. The result was that the roads to London were crowded with streams of mercenary carriers, bringing abandoned babies in baskets by the thousands to London, where they were dumped in the Foundling Hospital, some already dead or dying. The staff was overwhelmed and the mortality rate shot up to astonishing heights, until Parliament repented of its folly.

Boswell ends his remarkably timely book in the 18th century, at a moment when moral perceptions and technological improvements were about to create major change. In the 19th century contraception, and then abortion, became widely practiced; the economic condition of the poor at last began to improve; the state introduced welfare programs to look after the destitute; humanitarian ideology spread; and the romanticization of children began. As a result, it is morally almost unthinkable today to aban-

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don a child in the street, although it is perfectly respectable to put it up for adoption by another family. But millions of potential pregnancies are now yearly blocked by contraception, while many unwanted pregnancies are terminated yearly by swift and safe abortion—one and a half million in America, for example. In the past there was a huge surplus of unwanted children who were born only to be abandoned, the majority of whom lived and died miserably at the hands of unkind strangers, but now there is an acute shortage of children for adoption by childless couples.

THE WIDESPREAD and long-lived practice revealed by Boswell must be put in its context. It has to be remembered that these abandonments occurred in a society where poverty was so extreme that many families were incapable of feeding and clothing all their many children; where contraception was virtually unknown, and if known, was regarded as morally sinful to employ; where abortifacients were not only banned by the Church, but also often mixed with mercury and other heavy metals, with disastrous and often fatal results for the mothers. By and large, in sum, there were no known means, except sexual abstention, for the prevention of impregnation and childbirth. There were always more children born to the poor than their parents could or would support. The only solutions available were deliberate infanticide, including exposure or willful malnutrition, or abandonment in some public place on the off-chance that someone with large resources or some material use for the infant would pick it up and feed it.

Boswell's appalling story reminds us that public attitudes toward the treatment of children have changed so dramatically that child abuse by parents is today a major source of public and private concern. His low-keyed, scholarly, factual account of how the abandonment of children was a normal practice by perfectly respectable parents in the West for at least 1,800 years allows us to put our present options in a proper historical perspective. We are in a better position to make sound moral and practical choices between the only four alternative methods of dealing with the problem of unwanted children: sexual abstention, the use of contraceptive methods, aborting the fetus, or abandoning or killing live infants. Today we regard the first as physically unworkable; the second as apparently impossible to impose upon juveniles, while being unacceptable to many Catholics on religious grounds; the third as riddled with moral ambiguities; and the fourth as positively criminal. Our ancestors were much poorer than us, and without our medical technology, while the well-to-do were preoccupied with problems of the inheritance of property that hardly bother us today. Faced with the problem of unwanted children, they were obliged to choose the fourth option, abandonment and early death. They did it and, like Rousseau, they were not ashamed of it.

LAWRENCE STONE

Lawrence Stone is Dodge Professor of History and director of the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University. His most recent book is *The Past and the Present Revisited* (Routledge and Kegan Paul).

THE MAN WITHOUT QUALITIES

Five Seasons
by A. B. Yehoshua
translated by Hillel Halkin

(Doubleday, 359 pp., $19.95)

The Continuing Silence of a Poet: The Collected Stories of A. B. Yehoshua

(Peter Halban, 377 pp., £11.95)

For three decades, A. B. Yehoshua has been one of Israel's most consistently interesting writers of fiction. Part of the interest stems from Yehoshua's continual evolution as a writer, at a time when most novelists, in Israel and elsewhere, fall into producing minimally modified versions of a single fictional mode and a single thematic complex. The appearance in translation of his most recent novel *Five Seasons* (published in Hebrew two years ago under the title *Molkho*, which is the last name of the book's protagonist), and of *The Continuing Silence of a Poet*, gives English readers an instructive view of his development as a writer. It should be noted that *The Collected Stories of A. B. Yehoshua* is a somewhat misleading subtitle for the latter book, for it includes only four of the dozen Hebrew stories that constitute Yehoshua's first collection, *Death of the Old Man*, which appeared in 1963. But the book does provide a sampling of his early fiction, all of the middle work, and one quite recent piece. Taken together with *Five Seasons*, it offers an excellent sense of where Yehoshua has been and where he is going.

Yehoshua's earliest stories, published at the end of the '50s, announced a startling new direction for Israeli fiction. It had been dominated in the previous generation—the first of native Hebrew writers—by a somber realism, and an understandable concern with collective identity and its political contexts. The young Yehoshua, drawing on the surrealist vein in Agnon, the one great Hebrew modernist, and apparently on Kafka as well, plunged into a twilight world of tersely expressed fantasy, in which plot was a manifestation of the uncanny and character a ghostly glimmering of the unconscious. The strongest of these stories are quite arresting. But there is also something airless about the submerged world in which the fantasies confine us; and Yehoshua was impelled to move by stages toward a greater encompassing of the daylight realm of quotidian experience and recognizable individual character.

His earliest work consists entirely of brief stories. From the middle '60s through the early '70s, he produced half a dozen novellas that represented, in the deadpan narrative stance and deliberately restricted stylistic register he had already developed, the social and political realities of Israel of the period: the student ambience of the Hebrew University, the middle-class home of an Israeli engineer, the endemic anxiety of life during the War of Attrition, and so on.

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The realism of these novellas is purposefully precarious, however, because they all prove to be accounts of the steady seepage of the repressed into the words and acts of waking experience. Every turn of plot is "realistically motivated," as the structuralists say, but the sense of the uncanny that pervades the early stories is still quite evident.

The main characters, in a quiet articulation of seemingly plausible events, act out, or nearly act out, dark urges of destruction or self-immolation: the burning of a forest, the murder of an ex-mistress's child, the crushing by a car of an adolescent daughter's boyfriend. Yehoshua reinforces this feeling of people caught in a welter of faceless forces by generally refraining from giving his characters proper names, a practice still visible in *Five Seasons*, where most of the figures around Molkho remain anonymous. (His grown children, for example, are referred to only as "the soldier," "the college student," "the high-school student.")

Another means by which Yehoshua conveys a sense of reality spooked by the irrational is his preoccupation with sleep, narcolepsy, insomnia, and the liminal states between sleep and waking. This preoccupation is explicit in the anti-realist stories, most paradigmatically in a piece called "The Last Commander," but it continues through the quasi-realistic novellas, and on into the realism of the novels. In the new book, Molkho is religiously devoted to the afternoon naps he has adopted during his wife's long illness, and an assignation in a Berlin hotel with a woman co-worker (referred to solely as "the legal adviser") is frustrated when she sinks into a long orgy of sleep after he gives her a painkiller.

WHEN YEHOSHUA moved from story to novel in 1977 with *The Lover*, he also put behind him the more symbolic and fantastic modalities of his earlier work for a nicely delineated psychological realism. He adopted a style that dealt with individual character in the tight configuration of the nuclear family, and used a Faulkneresque technique of interior monologue that allowed him a new stylistic richness. *The Lover*, moreover, is deeply concerned with relations between Arab and Jew (it includes the first full-scale representation of an Arab's consciousness in Hebrew fiction), and with the national malaise in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur War.

Yehoshua's second novel, *Late Divorce*, which appeared in 1982, exhibits both the psychological interests and the Faulkneresque monologues of its predecessor, with a more exclusive focus on the family and no attention, except by implication, to political issues. Now *Five Seasons* replaces interior monologue with a seamless third-person narration strictly adhering to the protagonist's point of view, and its psychological realism is wholly concentrated on the events of a private life. Molkho's identity as a culturally insecure, unintellectual Israeli of old Sephardic background, his work in the government bureaucracy, the Haifa setting where he lives, are simply the background for his inner dilemma, not subjects at issue in the novel.

The book begins with the death of Molkho's wife from breast cancer, after seven years of lingering illness during which he has faithfully cared for her, renouncing all conjugal rights for the role of nursemaid. She is German-Jewish, cultivated, assertive, talkative, and fault-finding, in every respect the antithesis of her hapless husband. From the moment she breathes her last, Molkho's story becomes a study of the painful difficulties in the exercise of freedom. Standing by his wife's body, listening to the sound of a car speeding along the coastal highway below his apartment, he conjures up a vista of freedom. Within a few pages, as he braces for the first condolence calls, we are told that "he had always imagined that his wife's death would set him free, yet now he felt newly shackled." Freedom, for this man who has undergone seven years of sexual hibernation, is construed as the adventure of once again asserting his sexuality. But in Molkho's case character is fate with a vengeance, and every effort to escape his character shackles him to it more firmly.

The novel then becomes a narrative of sexual frustration in four acts. First, there is the failed affair with the legal adviser, who is not only too sleepy for Molkho, but also too intellectual, too unsensual, and too critical: she accuses him of killing his own wife, one of those nasty, unfair charges that has a strange ring of psychological conviction. Then, on a business trip to an immigrant village, he experiences a kind of infatuation with a pubescent East Indian girl, but he is the last man to play Humbert Humbert to any Lolita. In the two concluding sections of the novel, he finds himself involved, through circumstances not of his own choosing, with two decidedly anaphrodisiac women—an old schoolmate, longtime childless wife of Molkho's youth-movement counselor, who is worn, hairy, unkempt, and enveloped in cigarette smoke; and a fat, weirdly childish woman he refers to as The Rabbit, who speaks only Russian, whom he

AN ANCHORITE'S LAMENT

Once the road was recent, possible; a recluse
could walk there, select from a gospel of delight
the striking atmosphere, the all but still
and nearly liquid—and though from no cave
halfway subterranean—air; it breathed, sighed
almost, and the long view was held only
by the horizon encircling and the quavering,
catching as it congregated, autumn night.

One could lie there in the close, country air,
in the road's middle, in the continent's middle,
and languish on that mass sinking more slowly
than any civilization sloping to the sea;
One could feel the air, its ancient tenure, a cowl
that mimicked every movement, and make of it
a ritual, count each breath that breathed back:
one could brood to recover an original age.

Then distant farmhouses would shimmer, turn
dark in the abetting air, and leave behind them
the chaste ghost of light, as though a second
dawn moved west under that weather of autumn.
High clouds parted to reveal the moon,
the stars, all reeling once more in spheres
around the earth in its eternal pitch;
the center renewed and holding fast again.

And beyond, though still in view, on the edge
of the city, at familiar construction sites,
skeletal cranes poised against the sky fell
from disrepair to jumbled piles of relics;
and the city exploded, and trees poured out
cleansing smoke that blessed the life faithful
to cattails in ditches shouldering the road
between vanishing points, genesis and exodus.

GREGG HODGES

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helps return from Israel to Russia.

Molkho himself is unpromising human material, and a reader may well feel exasperation at his bottomless passivity. Still, he is rendered with unflagging psychological persuasiveness, and what the narrator observes at one point of the protagonist is what the reader in turn is likely to experience in regard to the protagonist: "He slowly felt his ridicule yield to an odd compassion." The play of metaphor and mental association (caught in Hillel Halkin's deft translation) through which Yehoshua renders Molkho's dogged persistence in the face of the unmanageable and the absurd is a chief indicator of the novel's sad, emotionally convincing comedy.

WHEN HE first embraces the legal adviser in the Berlin hotel lobby, "The soft fur of her coat made him think of a cold dog." Soon after, the strange smell of her sleeping body calls to his mind "exotic mosses growing deep in a subterranean cave." Four female soldiers to whom he gives a ride on a rainy night are "a single, giant woman, a sleeping, shallowly breathing, tetracephalous female pudding." He looks at his octogenarian mother-in-law, suddenly failing in strength, "of whom there seemed to be less and less, as if her daughter's death had sprung a leak through which she herself was gradually escaping." In context, none of this seems forced. Yehoshua, having experimented with a variety of literary artifices, from allegories of the unconscious to the orchestration of interior monologues, here fashions a kind of prose that is supple and unostentatious, the perfectly sustained expression of the main character's mind.

That mentality, it should be observed, places Molkho at an odd distance of puzzlement and hesitation from women. It is a posture that is characteristic of all Yehoshua's fiction. Every one of the examples I have just cited of comic-grotesque metaphor—many more could be adduced—symptomatically expresses the protagonist's tremulous perplexity in the presence of a woman, or women. At times it seems almost as though the female of the species were another species altogether, with its own unfathomable reflexes and physical traits—enveloped in animal pelts, associated with the spongy growth of dark caves, a many-headed amorphous pudding-creature. These images, which have certain obvious psychoanalytic implications, mirror the predicament of insecure virility that is a recurrent subject in Yehoshua's work, from the early stories and the novellas to all three of the novels.

One suspects that Yehoshua's fiction is not only a stylistic reaction against the Israeli "generation of 1948," but a psychological reaction as well. That first wave of native Hebrew writers was male-oriented, typically focusing its fictional attention on the male peer group (the army, the kibbutz, the youth movement), and imagining relations with the other sex in terms of an unsubtle code of masculine assertiveness, often oddly devoid of real sensuality. Yehoshua, by contrast, typifies his own generation of Hebrew writers in the move from the "regular guy," the *khevraman*, to the troubled individual; and he is open to the exploration of male fears of inadequacy, which at once yields muted comedy and leaves female figures largely as unknown others.

At the very end of *Five Seasons*, we find Molkho more or less where he was at the beginning: he is still longing, quite vaguely and quite desperately, for love, still stuck in the morass of his own passivity. Yehoshua, happily, appears to be headed for other territory. "Mr. Mani," a chapter of a novel in progress that appeared two years ago in a Hebrew periodical (it is included in *The Continuing Silence of a Poet*), is set in Jerusalem during World War I; and Yehoshua has confided that other sections of the novel will move back to the 19th century. Cast in the form of a one-sided dialogue between a Jewish junior officer in the British army and his colonel, focused on the elusive figure of a Levantine Jew who may or may not be a spy and may or may not be a Jewish nationalist, it is less concerned with psychology than with history, politics, and the multiple ambiguities of Jewish identity—all of which it treats with a sharpness of insight and a shrewd sense of wry comedy. One cannot yet make out where Yehoshua will take all this, but if his evolution as a writer until now is any indication, it will not be boring.

ROBERT ALTER

Robert Alter's new book, *The Pleasures of Reading in an Ideological Age*, will be published by Simon and Schuster in May.

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SDI's tortured journey has been marked by relentless partisan scrutiny, protracted scientific disputes, confrontations between Congress and the executive branch, and vicious bureaucratic turf wars. None of this was conducive to developing experimental technologies, let alone to recasting the foundations of American security. In the end, SDI's exaggerated political profile may have

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done more harm than good to the prospects for strategic defense.

Whatever its strategic legacy, though, SDI will long be remembered as one of the more freakish episodes in American politics. In a few inspirational paragraphs hastily prepared in secret by a handful of aides, the president's peroration attempted to invalidate four decades of nuclear orthodoxy, rejecting the bargain (the Faustian bargain, to be sure) that guaranteed security by making Americans hostage to Soviet nuclear annihilation. Over the heads of his closest advisers, Reagan spoke directly to the public, offering up a bold alternative to the decadence of assured destruction. American technological prowess and the will of the people would render nuclear missiles "impotent and obsolete," replacing them with a space-based astrodome of benign technologies that would deliver humanity, or at least the American part of it, from nuclear evil.

The president astonished the defense establishment, especially the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were busily preparing the sales pitch for an unprecedentedly ambitious program of nuclear modernization. Reagan imposed quite a burden on those who would have to implement his rhetoric. Space-based defenses were not only embryonic technologically, they were practically a taboo in polite company, generally seen as a preoccupation of extremists and cranks. Unprepared officials had to be converted into articulate advocates of space shields virtually overnight. As Alexander Haig remembered it, "In the Pentagon the next day . . . they were all rushing around saying 'what the hell is strategic defense?'."

DEFENSES had been part of the strategic scene for decades, of course. They were a permanent element of research conducted in the weapons laboratories and "advanced concept" centers of commercial contractors. The decision to deploy anti-ballistic missile defense in the 1960s and early 1970s had many supporters, especially in Congress. But with the signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 1972, nationwide defenses were not just limited in fact, they were repudiated in theory, except for a few renegades who kept the torch alive.

In 1983, however, strategic defense got a massive transfusion of respectability. To an electorate fearful of nuclear war but jaded by the antiseptic rhetoric and limited accomplishments of arms control, the idea of a "space shield" was

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The "New" PLO

Or: Can the Leopard Change Its Spots?

After more than 20 years of ostracism by most of the civilized world, Yasir Arafat, Chairman of the PLO, has finally uttered the "magic words" demanded by the U.S. It didn't come easy, and he didn't get it quite right. But it was good enough for Secretary of State George Schultz who, "the words" having been spoken, declared the willingness of the U.S. to talk with the PLO. One wonders whether that surprising opening will bring peace in the Middle East any closer to realization.

What are the facts?

■ Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, having wrung major concessions from Israel, promised that the U.S. would not deal with the PLO unless it fulfilled two conditions: (1) it would accept U.N. Resolutions 242 and 238; (2) it would recognize Israel's "existence". Congress added a third condition, namely that the PLO would renounce terrorism. Finally, after 20 years of obdurate resistance, Yasir Arafat, as spokesman for the PLO, did make those statements. Secretary Schultz decided therefore that the U.S. must establish contact with the PLO. Only a week earlier, the Secretary had refused Arafat a visa to enter the United States, because of his personal association with and personal responsibility for widespread terrorism all over the world.

■ What are the goals of the PLO, and is it likely that they have changed by the uttering of those three sentences? The PLO is a terror organization, created in 1964 by the Arab League. It has only one aim: the destruction of the State of Israel through force and violence. Any apparent deviation from this single-minded aim is a temporary tactical maneuver.

■ The basic charter of the PLO is the so-called "Palestinian National Covenant." Its main theme is that the State of Israel has no right whatever to exist. It states clearly that "Palestine...is an indivisible part of the Arab homeland," and that "the Arab-Palestinian people...reject all solutions that substitute for the total liberation of Palestine." Those PLO and Arab leaders who have from time to time ventured to propose a less inflexible approach have invariably paid with their lives for such deviation from PLO "orthodoxy".

■ The recent unilateral declaration by the PLO of a "Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem" on territory administered by and under control of Israel is an attempted step in that direction. The PLO was founded long before Israeli administration of Judea-Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip. Its avowed purpose was then, has always been and continues to be, not the establishment of a Palestinian state, but the destruction of Israel proper.

■ The PLO is the kingpin of international terror. It maintains a complex network of relations with all of the main terror organizations throughout the world. It has written a blood-spattered record of unrelenting terror. Some of their more "glorious" exploits: the mid-air explosion of a Swissair jetliner (47 dead); the attack on pilgrims and passengers at Ben-Gurion International Airport (26 dead, 76 wounded); the attack on Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics (11 dead); attack on the Ma'alot school (24 dead, 62 wounded—mostly children); the hi-jacking of a passenger bus on the Haifa-Tel Aviv highway (35 dead, 80 wounded); the coordinated shoot-outs at the Rome and Vienna Airports (16 dead); and the murderous attack on the Istanbul Synagogue, in which 21 worshippers were killed.

■ In their attacks against Americans, the PLO hand is suspected in many of the kidnappings of U.S. hostages. American citizen Leon Klinghoffer was brutally killed in the PLO ship-jacking of the *Achille Lauro*. Some of the most brutal PLO attacks against Americans have been against U.S. diplomats. In the Sudan, in 1973, two American diplomats, Ambassador Cleo Noel and Chargé d'Affaires George C. Moore, were mercilessly machine gunned to death when blackmail demands were not met. *The Washington Post* reported on reliable evidence that Yasir Arafat personally was in charge of these executions. In 1976, Ambassador Francis Meloy, Jr. and Counselor Robert Waring were assassinated in Beirut, an attack widely believed to have been the work of the PFLP, a faction of the PLO. In March of 1988, a bomb-laden car was placed in front of the Hilton Hotel in Jerusalem in an attempt to assassinate Secretary George Shultz. There have been many bombings, hi-jackings, and terrorist attacks in virtually every Mid-East and European country, leaving countless dead and wounded. While the final verdict is not yet in, it is generally assumed by our government and by those who are investigating this terrible crime that one of the Palestinian factions patterned after and instructed by the PLO is responsible for the bombing of Pan Am flight #103, which cost over 270 mostly American lives.

Can the leopard change its spots? It does not seem likely. And it does not seem likely that the PLO, engaged in unrelenting terror since its creation 24 years ago, could suddenly become a factor for peace, just because of the intonation of a few "magic phrases". It is comforting to think that peace in the Middle East can be achieved by bestowing respectability on the PLO. But the only way to bring about peace int he Middle East is by direct negotiations between Israel and representatives of the residents of the administered territories, as agreed in the Camp David Accord: a period of autonomy, after which the final disposition and status of the territories will be decided by the people involved. The PLO cannot be a party to the peace process, because its charter calls for war and destruction and because terror and peace cannot exist together.

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fetching. Strategists who had been intellectually disfranchised in 1972 felt a sudden burst of vindication. Innumerable defense contractors and private analysts were galvanized into action; this technical tabula rasa provided endless, lucrative opportunities.

Around the country, meanwhile, legions of activists were organized to expound upon SDI's promises and perils, a debate that came to include such noted strategic thinkers as the Gray Panthers, Phyllis Schlafly, and the Vatican. The president's speech transformed an old and rather obscure debate among military experts into a barometer of moral and political allegiances. Within months even highly arcane questions about the feasibility and the desirability of defensive technologies became a litmus test of support for a popular administration, and implicitly, for its idea of world order.

AT FIRST SDI was a public relations triumph, forcing critics to explain why they preferred nuclear vulnerability. But soon SDI demonstrated how the political process, like nature, abhors a vacuum. In a cloud of partisan confusion, SDI was wrestled into banality by technical uncertainties, competing interests, and the famous resilience of the status quo. Today any mention of population defense is considered terribly passé. It is openly acknowledged among officials that, except for Reagan, SDI was always intended for more prosaic objectives: to accelerate American military capabilities in space, to strengthen offensive nuclear forces, to dispense once and for all with the atavism of the ABM Treaty, or to capture the attention of the Soviets in Geneva. The old agendas of military supremacists and technological enthusiasts basked in the glamour of SDI, especially the opponents of arms control who, despite the nominal setback of the INF treaty, succeeded in averting an agreement to reduce central strategic forces.

For all the noise, SDI's contribution to significant change in American nuclear strategy remains negligible. In fact, its greatest contribution may have been its deflection of public and congressional attention from the major advances in offensive nuclear forces launched by the Reagan administration. What might have been highly controversial weapon programs (the D-5 submarine-launched missile, the B-1 and "Stealth" strategic bombers, advanced nuclear cruise missiles, and major investments in command and control for waging protracted nuclear war) sailed through Congress more or less unscathed. Similarly, large investments in the intellectual and material infrastructure for increasing the military use of space, including the establishment of a Unified Space Command, received scant attention. SDI served, then, as something of a Trojan horse, paralyzing defense critics in a theoretical debate about astrodomes while the real future of American strategy was being determined elsewhere.

WHO WAS ultimately responsible for stifling SDI's technological and political exuberance? Arms controllers and peace activists are quick to take most of the credit. Scientists who cast technical aspersions on the credibility of a peace shield, and were soundly attacked by SDI loyalists for their myopic adherence to the laws of physics, also step forward. Congress, too, played an important role. When administration officials tried to present a new interpretation of the ABM Treaty without consulting the Senate, it finally handed Congress the one issue it is best equipped to adjudicate: its own prerogative.

All these critics did have a hand, but the death of SDI actually took place within the traditional defense establishment, where warring factions of institutionalized interests moved to put their own stamp on "what the president meant to say." As both Angelo Codevilla and B. Bruce-Briggs demonstrate, some of the most important SDI disputes were to be found among the proponents of defenses. The intellectual and bureaucratic chaos in the wake of the president's speech encouraged fratricide among those who should have been natural allies, pitting space advocates against "terminal defense" advocates, supporters of research into futuristic technologies against supporters of "early deployment" of mature technologies, promoters of an immediate abrogation of the ABM Treaty against the politically cautious, supporters against opponents of "trading" SDI for an arms control deal with the Soviets, and traditional interests of the military services against the perceived incursions of the SDI organization. The old battles were heated up, under SDI.

Codevilla and Bruce-Briggs are both true believers in strategic defense who spare no recriminations about the bungling of SDI. Their books are filled with acrimony; they show no mercy even for Reagan, who is denounced, like his predecessors, for his failure to make defenses a reality. For Codevilla, a former aide to conservative Senator Malcolm Wallop, the greatest share of the blame for the failure to defend the country goes to the so-called "millennianists," from Bernard Brodie to Ronald Reagan, who have condemned more immediately promising defensive technologies to the permanent limbo of research.

THE THESIS of Codevilla's book is that "hardly any responsible person dissents from the proposition that in the 1980s and 1990s the Western world will have literally no choice other than to accept the Soviet Union's military superiority . . . or try to undermine it with strategic defense." Because of a perverse refusal to deploy defenses, Codevilla argues, irresponsible leaders have sacrificed countless opportunities to defend America. SDI is just the most recent example. Just about everyone associated with SDI is indicted in Codevilla's account, beginning with the Fletcher Panel, the original craftsmen of the technological parameters of the president's rhetoric, who gave it its futuristic orientation. "Under Reagan, as under his predecessors," Codevilla argues, "anti-missile defense would be a welfare program for scientists." Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson, until recently the SDI's director, who clocked more hours testifying on Capitol Hill than Oliver North, is dismissed as "an officer of the Air Force, which does not want to build anti-missile weapons. . . ." Poor Ronald Reagan let his program get hijacked by enemies of defenses, "the result both of conscious choice and mental limitations."

The climax of Codevilla's historical account of America's security failures is an argument for the deployment of "off-the-shelf" defensive technologies. He blasts those whose obsession with technological perfection has prevented the United States from deploying technologies he believes can counter the Soviet Union's military superiority right now. He particularly favors a range of systems for the defense of missile sites, such as the ERIS ground-based interceptor, and various space-based lasers, for which Codevilla and Wallop lobbied tirelessly in the Senate in the early 1980s with little success.

There is no pretense here about a "non-nuclear world" or the dangers of nuclear war-fighting as the raison d'être for strategic defense. On the contrary, Codevilla sees the renunciation of defenses in American strategy as symp-

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tomatic of a broader failure to develop effective "counterforce" capabilities, or nuclear forces to destroy Soviet military targets promptly and accurately. Defenses, in the author's view, are part and parcel of a strategy of "self-protection and the ability to fight wars."

Unfortunately, many technical reports contradict Codevilla's untarnished enthusiasm for "mature" defense technologies. The Pentagon's Defense Science Board, among others, has criticized the space-based laser for its questionable survivability, uncertain "system performance," and exorbitant costs. The ERIS system, a ground-based interceptor designed to blunt a very small missile attack, has won support as a political halfway house for defense moderates, but it is still seen by many as "Safeguard revisited." (Safeguard was an ERIS precursor that was canceled in the 1970s because its limited capabilities and high costs overshadowed any publicly compelling mission.)

THE REASON we don't have defenses today, Codevilla argues, is not because of the limits of technology. The endless technical debates about defenses are fraudulent. In fact, there is a "technical bounty out of proportion to the moral insight and strategic competence of those who have been in charge." The real reason defenses have been limited is powerful resistance by the "defense establishment," which rigidly adheres to "the strategy of mutually assured destruction." Enslaved by the legacies of Robert McNamara (who is alleged to have renounced not only defenses, but any serious countermilitary nuclear capabilities), the Pentagon is an enemy of American security. "The typical member of the defense establishment does *not* believe that each of us has a duty to preserve each innocent human life." (There are a few heroes, though; they include Malcolm Wallop, the Army Ballistic Missile Command, T. K. Jones, a few individuals at the Lockheed Corporation, the Senate Intelligence Committee, and Aristotle, who was an early advocate of defenses in his support of walls around cities.)

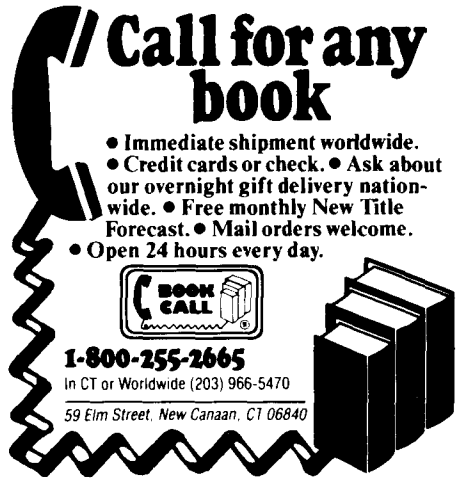
Codevilla's account of the weaknesses of American nuclear strategy and of Soviet military superiority, of the failure "to keep up with the Ivans," as he puts it, is a familiar refrain from the abundant literature about the so-called "window of vulnerability." The Soviets are not only capable of wiping out "90 percent of our land-based missiles . . . and nearly all of our bombers," but have sufficient defensive capability to blunt any credible American retaliation. A combination of nine phased-array radars, a mobile surface-to-air missile currently under construction (the SA-12), and a space-based high-energy laser scheduled to be tested this year is alleged to accord the Soviets with "a good chance of intercepting most, if not all, warheads from a U.S. attack if that attack is spread evenly over thousands of targets in the Soviet Union."

The Strategic Air Command will choke on that one. Soviet defenses may complicate American nuclear targeting over time, but the notion that they have already emasculated American counterforce capabilities is ludicrous. The techniques for tracking and intercepting missiles with high-energy lasers are embryonic at best; and relatively rudimentary systems like the SA-12 would have quite a time disarming hundreds of American bombers and missiles armed with multiple, highly accurate warheads. The tens of billions already spent on Soviet air defenses since the 1950s have not shaken SAC's confidence in the ability of American bombers to penetrate Soviet air space, nor have they prevented a 21-year-old West German from landing his Cessna in Red Square.

AND YET *While Others Build* should not be dismissed as the ravings of a crank. It is well written, original, and carefully documented; and it is an important example of a point of view that we are likely to see again soon, not least because Wallop, Codevilla's former mentor, has just found a seat on the Senate Armed Services Committee. Codevilla's book is important evidence of the divisions within the defense community that are likely to re-emerge in the next round of the debate about defenses and American strategy. These disagreements about technological objectives reflect an ancient struggle in the scientific and technical communities between applied research and basic research. That struggle has become a political fight between "early deployment" options and the pursuit of exotic technologies. The competition is over clout, turf, and funding, not to speak of desirable strategic outcomes.

There are many adherents to Codevilla's view, for example, that the promise of defense has nothing to do with a visionary transcendence of the nuclear dilemma, that it is simply the next logical step in the military rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. There are also those who believe, however, that the Walloping pressure to move to the deployment of terminal defenses detracts from the prospects for a real "technological end-run" against the Soviets, which would be achieved through accelerated deployments in space. Then there is the battle for control of the institutions of strategic defense: Space Command is developing new models for space war operations; the Navy is urgently seeking to develop an anti-satellite capability; any number of contractors have developed prototype defense systems that could be ready for deployment in the relatively near future. And there is an SDI bureaucracy, with 200 full-time professionals just in Washington, as well as a technical-industrial infrastructure including thousands of scientists and engineers employed in SDI-related activity.

It is likely, in other words, that the de-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bate about American strategy will be held hostage to the distortions of politics. Codevilla's analysis sheds some light on the process of innovation in a democracy. Unless they are given operational meaning and serious bureaucratic power, presidential promises, whatever their nature, are likely to get emasculated by entrenched interests. As Codevilla aptly observes, "It is normally up to non-bureaucrats—civilian leaders or extraordinary military men—to wrench a bureaucracy out of its ruts. . . ." Bold exhortations, even from a president, won't suffice.

Codevilla would solve this problem for strategic defenses by developing a fifth military service, the United States Strategic Defense Force. This idea, which already has been rejected by the Congress and ridiculed by the Pentagon as a needless bureaucratic diversion, may yet find its way into a Senate amendment before too long.

BRUCE-BRIGGS'S *The Shield of Faith*, described as "the untold story of strategic defense," has a cast similar to Codevilla's: countless bunglers who have sacrificed American safety because of their indifference to strategic defense capabilities, and heroes who tried to stop them. Its author, identified as a former analyst at the Hudson Institute and the U.S. Army War College, is also an impassioned preacher for all manners of defense. But the similarities more or less stop there.

Bruce-Briggs makes no pretense of analysis; at least I hope not. His narrative of the history of the strategic defense debate begins with the origin of defenses in the epochal moment "when a near-ape tried to seize berries from his neighbor, and the neighbor resisted"; moves bravely on through the "balloon threat," technology initiated by the Montgolfier brothers in France but developed by an American, Dr. Thaddeus Sobieski Coulincourt Low, who launched his balloons in Rosslyn, Virginia (a city that "lacks so much as a brass plaque" in commemoration of the feat); careens through the nuclear age; and crashes to a halt with some laments about SDI. The book is peppered with anecdotes about individuals' private lives, nicknames, acronyms, and all the other claptrap of "insider accounts." (The poor man's relentless effort to demonstrate his insider status is marred by a massive and goofy mangling of names.) It is written without any of the usual constraints of serious non-fiction, such as documentation, chronology, or grammar.

The book is worthy of note, in fact, only as a remarkable piece of strategic kitsch. Bruce-Briggs apparently sees himself as the Dominick Dunne of the Crystal City set. But for his effort, grunts who might otherwise have slipped through the cracks of history are enshrined in gossipy stories that chronicle their contributions, however modest, to the Defense. (In good fundamentalist fashion, the book uses Capital Letters and emphatic punctuation!!) As usual, such stories about "the players" trivialize a matter of consequence.

Bruce-Briggs offers also a few choice revisions of historical events. The most remarkable, surely, concerns the aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is not for the intellectually squeamish:

> Hiroshima, which was not much of a city to begin with, sort of a Japanese Toledo, made the best of a horrid situation, and generated a respectable tourist trade from being flattened in an innovative manner. Nagasaki, at the wrong end of Japan and lacking an airport, just went back to work—nobody cares about who is second.

Then there is the oddity of the acronyms, which are plentiful, as would be expected in a book about defense. Every few pages, an acronym is spelled out phonetically, to help the reader in conversation. SDI is helpfully followed by "ess-dee-aye." SDIO, the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization, which appears on the same page, is followed by "ess-dee-aye-oh." (My favorite is the acronym for the Director of Defense Research and Engineering, which is kindly provided as "dee-oh-dee-are-'n-ee.") And there is also the odd use of sexual imagery to describe defense-related matters, not entirely uncommon in defense parlance, where penetration aids and hard targets are a mainstay of conversation. Bruce-Briggs's erotic imagery is strange even for his business: "the sperm of the Air Force impregnating the womb of the nation," if you see what I mean.

SOMETIMES the kitsch crosses the line into something worse. Bruce-Briggs prints in its entirety the transcript of the suicide message that Donald Brennan, the former defense analyst at Hudson, left for his secretary in 1980. Brennan was a respected scholar even among those who disagreed with him; and he was not the sort to seek notoriety, even posthumously. But Bruce-Briggs not only gives us the death note, he has a tendentious little explanation for the poor man's death. It is that Brennan, who was a fervent advocate of strategic defense before such advocacy was politically popular, may have been "done in" by "the very success of MAD." As far as I know, this is the first confirmed loss of life from this dangerous doctrine.

FRIVOLOUS BOOKS like Bruce-Briggs's should not divert attention from the serious security dilemmas that lie ahead. Reagan did nothing to change the basic calculus of nuclear deterrence, but he did help to demonize it. It is now up to George Bush to try to repackage this tired, inescapable paradigm in his own image. SDI won't help him much. It gave the United States some leverage in arms control negotiations, though not quite as much leverage as the rise of Gorbachev gave us, and not enough leverage for an agreement on strategic nuclear weapons; and it advanced the technical foundations for missile defense and military space operations, for better or worse. But the SDI debate has lulled the American public into confusion or complacence about security and insecurity in a nuclear world.

Political imperatives, notably support for "early deployment" in Congress (the supporters used to include Dan Quayle), may force a debate on whether to go forward with at least a nominal deployment in the near future. But there is a good reason not to get too preoccupied with this relatively prosaic, if controversial, decision. Long before we will have had time to make an informed judgment about the role of defenses in American strategy, the technology for sophisticated anti-satellite systems will be dangerously in hand. Anti-satellite missions are a natural home for a number of SDI technologies that might otherwise be orphaned as support for the program wanes. The proliferation of weapons in orbit could make our current anxieties about nuclear stability look like child's play.

JANNE E. NOLAN

Janne E. Nolan, a visiting fellow at the Brookings Institution, is the author of *Guardians of the Arsenal: The Politics of Nuclear Strategy*, to be published by New Republic Books this fall.

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CALLS TO CONSCIENCE

In the African-American Grain: The Pursuit of Voice in Twentieth-Century Black Fiction

by John F. Callahan

(University of Illinois Press, 296 pp., $21.95)

In his path-breaking *Narrative* of 1845, Frederick Douglass writes of the horror and anger that began to consume him when, at the age of 12, he realized he had been sentenced to the unimaginable fate "of being a *slave for life*." Then, striking that characteristic providential note, as if his story were finally arranged in collaboration with divine narrative design, Douglass tells us that "just about that time I got hold of a book entitled 'The Columbian Orator.'" There Douglass found an exchange between a slave, newly recaptured after a third effort at escape, and his master. "In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave." The slave spoke "smartly" and "impressively," which, Douglass slyly observes, "had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master."

Likewise, just when Douglass's narrative threatens to trail off into a repetitiveness mirroring its teller's condition of perpetual slavery, Douglass and his tale are delivered, not by outrage or assertion alone, but by an exemplary performance of liberating self-representation. For Douglass, too, the end of his "argument" would be freedom. His *Narrative* is as much a demonstration as a description of the emancipatory triumph of linguistic self-possession: to be free is to "get hold of" one's experience, one's history, and one's future through a persuasive expression of one's just desire in the world.

Such an ideal of performative power clearly imagines for itself a certain kind of audience. "The moral which I gained from the dialogue," Douglass tells us, "was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder." The effort to articulate and thereby to enact the ends of justice implicitly creates an appropriately responsive community. The slave's rhetoric is efficacious in its appeal to a democratic vision that provides the common ground of an enlightened American identity. Douglass offers a certain relation of writer and reader on the American scene: the word, reduced neither to pure intention nor to absolute abstraction, becomes in the slave's hands a force for personal and cultural change.

Slave and master alike are revolutionized by this expressive interplay, the latter coming into possession of "conscience" just as surely as his black interlocutor finds himself materially transvalued by an unexpected didactic authority. In the vernacular terms to which Douglass covertly alludes (beneath a complex manipulation, by turns ironic and defiant, of Enlightenment norms of rational interchange), the master's conversion to "truth" is the self-liberating response to a call to "conscience" offered by the slave's discourse, a discourse that is itself already a response to the call-to-freedom underlying Douglass's very American "moral." In this sense, Douglass's fable is a heuristic call first to Douglass, and then, by way of his responsive *Narrative*, to us, to participate in the ongoing, improvisatory, always surprising "conversation" about American identity and the principles it would affirm through ceaseless political action and communal interaction.

With *In the African-American Grain*, John Callahan enters the crucible of this conversation by explicating its history, thematic texture, and rhetorical form in the black narrative tradition that Douglass did so much to shape. Through a series of richly illustrated and deftly argued interpretations of key 20th-century African-American prose texts, from Charles Chesnutt's folktale-inspired *The Conjure Woman* to Alice Walker's modernist parable *Meridian*, Callahan pursues black literary tradition as both a reflection and an agent of an American cultural dynamic based on vernacular forms of storytelling. For Callahan, the call-and-response structure of African-American oral culture provides the source and the goal of black writing, embodying its enabling aesthetic technique and its continuous political meaning.

Black writers are not, like many of their white Euro-American counterparts, portrayed here as ignoring or nostalgically despairing of their alienated roots in the voiced paradigms of preliterate or popular tradition. In their hands, rather, call-and-response evolves into a resilient literary device that persuades readers to become symbolic (and perhaps active) participants in the story. Callahan views black fiction as a keenly collaborative effort between page and performance, tradition and author, text and reception. In his account, call-and-response delivers writer and reader from the disabling antinomies of modernism, from those abysmal spaces between knowledge and engagement, self and community, writer and audience so characteristic of contemporary Western art. In black literature, Callahan argues, those spaces are filled by an endlessly dialectical narrative reciprocity. For the African-American writer, Callahan writes, "Call-and-response is a name for the evolving dialogic forms of democracy."

Callahan's contribution to the evolving critical debate on black literature's relation to the vernacular stems from his vision of storytelling and story-writing as a mutual, even conversational, enterprise. Normative interpretations of black literature are organized around rephrased versions of W. E. B. DuBois's seminal description of African-American culture as the fragmenting experience of "double-consciousness," the awareness of split origins, affiliations, and aspirations captured so crisply in the very designation "African-American." Thus we are told that black literature enacts this "two-ness" as a ceaseless tension between assimilationism and nationalism, celebration and protest, nihilism and prophecy, folk and elite. As a result, the tradition is either reified into a rather static series of tableaux figuring the selected emblem of doubleness or distorted in the service of one of its poles. And as a result works are judged primarily by their fidelity to or betrayal of the idealized half of the opposition.

But Callahan's reading of the interweaving of writing and voice in black literary narration moves beyond such disabling dualistic patterns. For when Callahan examines this encounter of expressive modes in relation to specific thematic interests and fictional techniques (the "antiphonal" relation of landscape to a sensibility in Jean Toomer's enigmatic *Cane*, or the quest for a "womanist" autobiographical voice in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, or the conjunction of personal and collective historiography in

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Ernest Gaines's *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*), he finds there a complex, "fraternal" mingling of methods and impulses. Drawing no ideological boundary between writing and speech, Callahan describes a narrative tradition responding to the call of communal identity and political challenge with the improvisational energy of vernacular performance.

IN A SENSE, then, "voice" for Callahan operates less as a material, empirical fact than as a kind of metaphorical structure. Storytelling in the African-American grain is understood here as a perspective on experience in America, a certain manner of remembering, arranging, and rearranging the nation's indigenous but oft-neglected principles. At the heart of this perspective is a belief in change, the endless need to shift the contours of identity with the metamorphic flow of unexpected circumstances and choices. Thus history becomes not an enemy but an ally of literary expression, though it is history understood, like tradition, in a heuristic sense. Reducible neither to purely subjective discourse nor to absolute mimetic datum, history and black narrative alike propose a "fiction" of American identity that lacks neither meaning nor actual force. Voicing one's story revoices history itself, but it also submits one's history to the transformational play of the other voices that constitute the American scene—a lesson Callahan enacts by beginning his study with an autobiographical tale, replete with echoes of Douglass and Ellison, of his early education from several black Americans while growing up in Irish Catholic New Haven.

Here, perhaps, we come upon the most intriguing, the most scandalous, and yet the most sensible, implications of Callahan's reading of modern black writing. When the reader encounters the successfully voiced black text, an astonishing responsibility for interpretive activity arises. The text does not speak an unchanging word. Already mediated by a legacy of oral performance, it becomes a momentary crystallization of that continuous American confrontation with the ambiguities of our multifaceted selves. In this way, black narrative calls readers to think through, and perhaps to reconstruct, their own relation to political, familial, and cultural discourses, thus formulating what Ralph Ellison termed the "next phase" of our revolutionary fiction of identity. From this point of view, the black text becomes both a material practice and an idealized site of self-experimentation, and no single interpretation can exhaust its significance. Callahan's vision of the African-American grain, finally, goes radically *against* the grain of conventional criticism's paradoxical impulse to mystify writing while jealously bringing its meaning to closure.

Ultimately only the act of interpretation secures the text's desired status as a performance with both contextual particularity and enduring resonance. In some sense, then, the reader is as much the hero of Callahan's account as is the writer. And yet this dispersion of rhetorical power has the salutary effect of reversing modernism's enervating alienation of "literature" from political and historical existence. As Callahan puts it, "In their fiction, black writers call readers to their personal responsibility for the still evolving story of American identity and nationhood." Like Douglass's *Narrative*, Callahan's engaging study takes its cue from the unexpected heroism of the vernacular performer. For understood as an (ex)"enslaved" yet "native" heir of the American ideal, the African-American writer reminds us that we are all bonded by our ownership of selves persuasively improvised in the continuous dialogue we call tradition.

KIMBERLY W. BENSTON

Kimberly W. Benston is professor and chair of English at Haverford College. He is the editor of the recently published *Speaking for You: The Vision of Ralph Ellison* (Howard University Press).

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 4*

PSUEDEPIGRAPHY

To the editors:

Just a footnote to Hillel Halkin's review of *Dictionary of The Khazars* ("Fic•tio•nary," December 19) in which he questions whether Milorad Pavíc, the alleged author of this historical novel, is himself a work of fiction. As evidence, Halkin cites the contents not only of a major university library but also of six reference texts, none of which make any mention whatsoever of a Milorad Pavíc. Halkin's suspicions are on the right track no doubt, but the most elegant proof to support his hypothesis lies not in any reference text but in the requisite bio which Knopf provides and which Halkin repeats in his article. "Currently he [Pavíc] is a professor of Serbian literature in Belgrade, where he also raises borzoi hounds."

A cursory glance at any Knopf publication will reveal at the bottom of the spine a stylized drawing of an athletic dog. Further investigation within the text of such a book will disclose the breed of the dog in this inscription: "This is a Borzoi Book. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc."

KEN TAKATA
Oak Park, Illinois

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LONDON DIARIST

It's Noonan in America

DESPITE THE COMMUNICATIONS revolution, it's still surprisingly easy to feel out-of-touch—even in London, which is hardly what people think of when they say "foreign" (or even, for that matter, "outside the beltway"). My *New York Times* arrives anything from one to three days late (and at a cost to the *Economist*, where I'm working for a few months, of almost $3,000 a year), and emergency rations of the *Washington Post* are dropped in by airbag in one large weekly clump. (The abbreviated stories in the highly-regarded *International Herald Tribune* are more teasing than satisfying—like trailers for a movie called *Newspaper*.) Gossip arrives even later than news as such, and vibes don't travel at all. So I'm a bit behind the curve. For all I know, they're saying that George Bush is a wimp again and that John Tower's enormous valor under media pressure makes him a front-runner for the 1992 Republican presidential nomination. Just a guess.

NEVERTHELESS, THE IMPRESSION Washington has given from afar in recent weeks is that everyone is stoned: smiling dreamily and saying "Wow! Far out!" at the sight of perfectly normal things like presidential press conferences and elderly ladies with gray hair. The way the press allowed George Bush to remake himself so casually—snarly Harvard-bashing anti-elitist one day, kindly Yale establishmentarian the next, and so on—greeting each transformation with rapturous cries of "At last, his own man" and equally rapturous profiles of the woman who actually wrote the words—mystifies many Europeans. (It is a hallowed convention of journalism that an American journalist, when living abroad, may refer to himself as "many Europeans." Under the Reciprocal Unidentified Sources Protocol of 1926, British newspaper correspondents in Washington may likewise characterize their own observations as those of "thoughtful Americans." And they do.)

THE BLANKET OF amiability smothering Washington has even wrapped itself around the sinister figure of Lee Atwater. Why anyone takes seriously Bush's unctuous calls for bipartisanship when he anoints as Republican party chairman the very author of his viciously demagogic election campaign puzzles America's friends throughout the world. (That's me, too.) Sophisticated foreign opinion (ditto) is especially astonished at the contrast between the press's treatment of Atwater's appointment and of Ron Brown's selection as chairman of the Democrats. Brown gets the full "controversial" treatment because he spent a few weeks last summer working for Jesse Jackson. Meanwhile Atwater, whose role in the 1988 campaign was far more nefarious, floats on a wave of favorable publicity over the fact that he thinks blacks have good rhythm. In truth, Brown is no lefty. Like Atwater, he is a more-or-less value-free Washington operator. But that won't stop Atwater from using Brown to paint the Democrats as dangerously dominated by that other black fellow. Nor will love for rhythm-and-blues.

THERE ARE MANY snakes in Washington, but few have Atwater's gift for patent insincerity. He told William Greider of *Rolling Stone*, in a recently published interview, that his political philosophy—learned at the feet of Strom Thurmond, no less—is "individual freedom and the whole notion that government governs best that governs least." That must be why he built a presidential campaign on the issue of forcing people to recite the Pledge of Allegiance against their will. Occasionally Atwater's true political philosophy—any weapon to hand—trips him up. He sent out a Republican fund-raising letter attacking the Democratic-controlled Congress for giving itself a pay raise just as President Bush was endorsing said pay raise. Atwater claimed the pay raise material was inserted by staff members without his knowledge. I suppose that is conceivably not a lie. But whatever gave those poor, misguided staff members the idea that Atwater would care to score a few cheap points off the pay raise?

JOHN TOWER SAYS: "There will always be people who will suspect anyone who has been formerly associated with the defense industry." That's true, and count me as one of them, but recent criticism of Tower on this matter misses the point. Tower was paid $750,000 last year by a gunnery of defense contractors, ostensibly "to monitor developments" (Tower's own delightful euphemism) on their Pentagon contracts. Senator Sam Nunn posed the conventional objection at Tower's confirmation hearings: "How can Senator Tower be objective after receiving $750,000 from these contractors?" Nunn made clear that the question was merely a hypothetical constituent's query and that he himself was suspicion-free. I agree with Senator Nunn. Surely a man of Tower's stature cannot be bought for a mere $750,000. But do we want a defense secretary who apparently sees nothing wrong with the idea of defense contractors paying someone—even someone as distinguished as former Senator John Tower—$750,000 a year "to monitor developments"? After all, that $750,000—like many millions paid to other Washington development monitors—is actually paid in the end by the taxpayers, in the form of higher weapons prices. The companies wouldn't buy Tower and people like him if they didn't think the investment would pay for itself, and then some. The defense secretary-designate, in short (so to speak), is the very embodiment of Pentagon waste. Cap Weinberger bought a lot of $600 toilet seats. John Tower *is* a $600 toilet seat.

I MAY BE the only person you know who made a New Year's resolution to *start* drinking at lunch. In fact, as part of this foreign adventure, I'm trying to drink more in general. When in Rome, and so on. Abstinence and moderation are spreading among British journalists just as they are in America, but they are advancing more slowly here and start from further behind. Despite a decade of Calvinist Mrs. Thatcher, the long liquid lunch is still not totally out of fashion. (And there seems to be an inverse correlation among British journalists between the preaching of Thatcherism and the practicing of it.) Nevertheless, it's darned hard to amend the habits of a lifetime. Despite earnest efforts, I keep falling back on the wagon. My brain says go for that third glass of wine but my hand has a mind of its own and reaches involuntarily for the water jug. I'm trying to do better: dissipation takes discipline. Informed British observers view future developments with cautious optimism.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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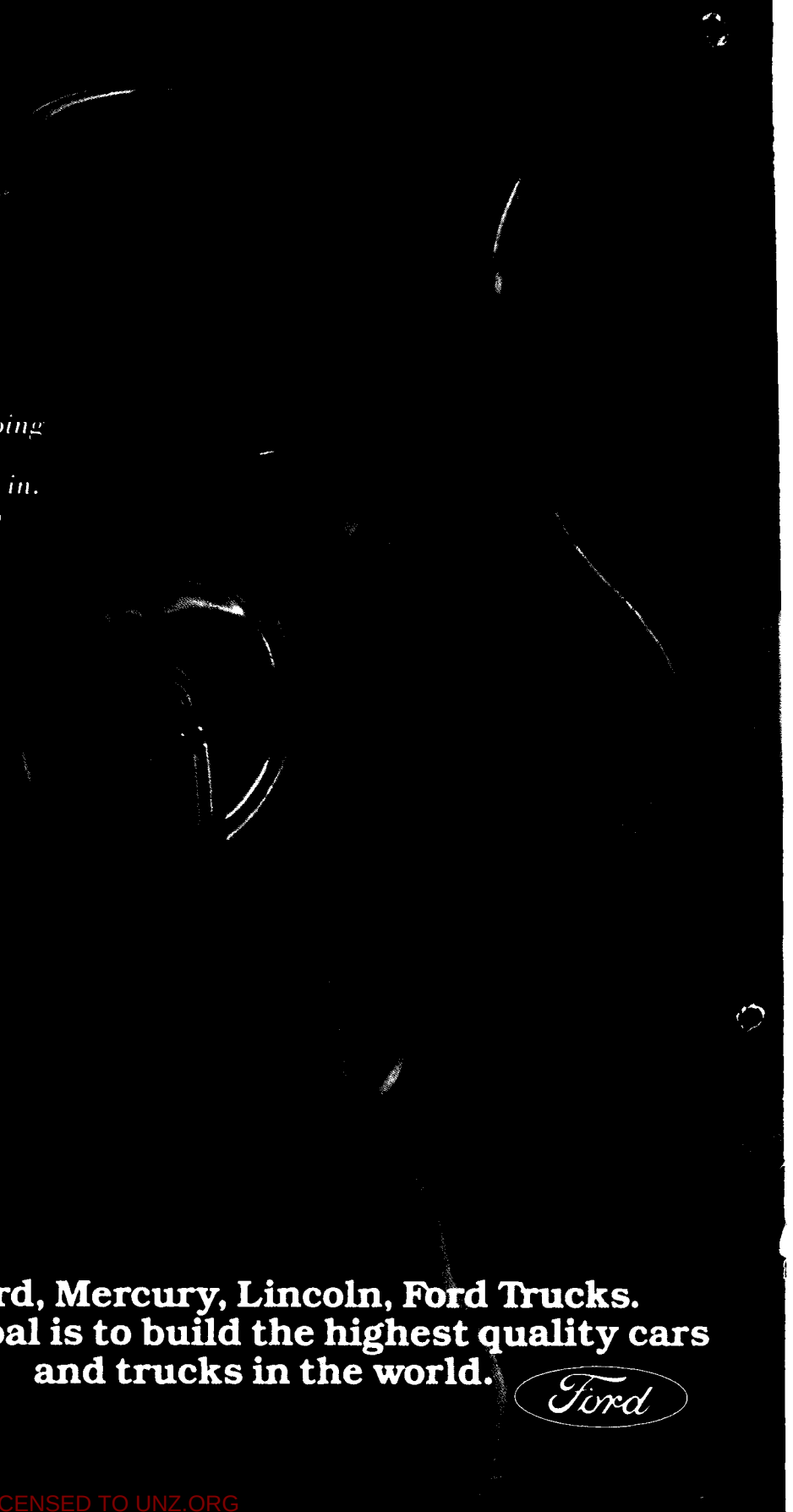

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